WORKERS OF THE WORLD. UNITE

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Stalinism and the German Crisis

The «Daily Worker» Contributes Three Errors To a Serious Question

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The decisive influence exerted by the intervention of America in the stabilization of European capitalism, following the defeat of the German proletariat in 1923, was sufficient to establish its role as the greatest counter-revolutionary factor on an international scale. It is from this that the present attempt of Hoover, of which the moratorium proposals are a first step, derives its enormous importance and calls for the most careful analysis by the Communists. Unless we see the thing straight, we cannot expect to bring forward in time the appropriate counter-measures. And it is here, just as in 1923 and 1924, that the blunders are being made by the official leaders.

ANOTHER FORM OF AMERICAN HEGEMONY

The role of America as a "stabilizer" was greatly facilitated in the previous instance by the blunders of the Comintern. The present endeavors to hold off a revolutionary crisis, receive the same gratuitous assistance. Now, as then scientific analysis gives way to guess—work and insistence on pre-conceived theories which are refuted by the events themselves. And in this work, the American Stalinists distinguish themselves above all others. They bid fair to match the hegemony of American imperialism with a peculiar hegemony of their own in the realm of stupidity.

They are hindered from a correct approach to these great international events by a false theory which they have built around themselves like a prison wall. And, as though the theory of socialism in one country were not sufficient to hide the real international processes from them, they have superimposed upon it another one to make blindness doubly sure. Such is the purpose served by the theory of "fascism" and "social fascism" as the editorial comments of the **Daily Worker** illustrate.

In a previous issue we called attention to the failure of the **Daily Worker** to consider the German revolution in its first analysis of Hoover's action and its purposes. In the issue of July 14th the leading editorial of the **Daily Worker** attempts to make good this "oversight" In doing so, however, it makes at least three other mistakes, and leaves the original one uncorrected. The idea of a German revolution, which was left out of account entirely at first, is sprinkled throughout the editorial of July 14th. But in spite of that, the repeated references do not fit into the structure of the analysis. They stand out awkardly, like "back-writing", as though they were written in after the fact, to disarm criticism.

The mentioned editorial has the following to say: "American workers should understand that the same reason which makes all imperialisms strive to turn Germany into an active foe of the Soviet Union, impels them to welcome a Fascist dictatorship in Germany and prepare for armed intervention against any proletarian revolution in Germany."

Here are three fundamental misconceptions compressed into one sentence. a fairly high mark even for the **Daily Worker.** First they talk about the imperialist design to "turn Germany into an active foe of the Soviet Union." Is not capitalist Germany by its very nature an "active foe" of the Soviet Union? Are not the two systems—the Soviet and the capitalist—irreconcilable? Lenin said, and every Marxist knows, that the two cannot live peacefully, that "the obituary will have to be sung either over the death of world capitalism or the death of the Soviet republic". Is capitalist Germany not a part of world capialism, is it something standing inbetween? For us the answer to such a question is obvious. And that is why we bank on the German revolution. That is why the capitalists who also approach questions on the other side from the same fundamental class point of view, strive primarily to avert it.

The Stalinists answer these questions in their own way. They are constructing socialism in one country. From this follows their theory of the "neutralization of the bourgeoisie," and the division of the capitalist countries into "active foes" and . . . friends. With such ideas, the prospect of revolution in a "friendly country" can easily be overlooked.

IMPERIALISTS AND A FASCIST DICTATORSHIP

Second, they say the imperialists will welcome a Fascist dictatorship in Germany. This idea appears a number of times in the editorial. They insist on it continually. But, nevertheless, the imperialists do not have such a policy. At the present time, the main prop of capitalism in Germany is the social democracy functioning through "democratic" forms. Its strength derives from the illusions of millions of workers in the democratic deceptions. It is absurd to think that the imperialists will discard this mighty bulwark against revolution long as it serves its purpose.

Only when the majority of the workers turn away from the social democracy to the Communists, will the capitalists turn to the last resort—naked force expressed through Fascism. A Fascist dictatorship, by its ruthless abolition of democratic forms, would thereby turn away millions of workers from the support of the regime, and correspondingly undermine it. It has never yet been demonstrated that Fascism can have a stable endurance in such a highly industrialized country as Germany, with a powerful and well organized working class. The imperialist bourgeoisie whose fate is bound up with the fate of German capitalism, have no interest to plunge into this desperate alternative of their own volition. On the contrary, they have every reason to reinforce and support the social democracy and the parliamentary forms which have served them and saved them up to now. They will not risk Fascism till they have to, not even to justify the theories of the **Daily Worker** and the rest of the Stalinists.

The third mistake of the **Daily Worker** editorial, in which they tip their hat belatedly to the German proletarian revolution is embodied in the statement that the imperialists "prepare for armed intervention against any proletarian revolution in Germany". Taken by itself and presented as a supplement to the present interference in German affairs, such a declaration of imperialist intentions would be self-evident. But the Stalinists, in offering it as the crux of the imperialist attitude toward the German revolution, distort the picture entirely. **The imperialists are intervening now against the German revolution!** They are doing so because they see it as the greatest danger in the present situation to the whole structure of world imperialism, and the most powerful reinforcement of the Soviet Union. The proletariat will be able to frustrate the maneuvers of imperialism only to the extent that it sees the heart of the problem with equal clarity. Stalinist theories and conclusions, which the **Daily Worker** raises to the apex of absurdity, contribute nothing but confusion to the question.

—J. P. C.

Second League Conference

The second national conference of the Communist League of America (Opposition) has been called by the national committee to take place on September 24 to September 27 in the city of New York. In this issue of the **Militant,** the principal conference thesis is published the membership. Despite the additional for the consideration and discussion of two pages in the **Militant,** we have been compelled to omit from this issue a great deal of valuable material on other questions which will be published in the coming number. The **Militant** will, however, continue to publish in its columns the discussion material sent to it by League members during the pre-conference period. The thesis is published on pages three, four and five.

READ AND SUBSCRIBE TO THE MILITANT

Demonstrate on August 1 Against Imperialist War!

Behind the thick smoke of pacifist assurances and "disarmament" conferences, the imperialist world today presents a picture of a more thoroughly armed camp than the days preceding the world war of 1914. The United States piously demands the reduction of armaments in Europe, fortified by the certainty that under any conditions its industrial and financial superiority will give it the edge in a military conflict. France has just announced that it has "reduced" its armaments as far as it intends to.

With the world crisis gaining in fury, capitalism is driven to the wall hunted down by its own inherent contradictions. The big powers are straining forward for a re-division of the world market and of world political power. They know that this redivision can be accomplished only through war. They are preparing for it, assisted—as in 1914—by their "socialist" footmen.

Let the workers give a vigorous response to the imperialist war plans on the thirteenth anniversary of the last slaughter. All out in mass to the August First demonstrations this year!

Paterson On Strike

N.T.W. Must Take Initiative in United Front of All Silk Workers

Paterson, scene of bitterly-fought battles of the textile workers in past years, is again occupying the center of the strike field. The National Textile Workers Union has issued the call for a walkout of the silk and dye workers of the city, involving some 20,000 black and white workers of both sexes. The N. T. W. demands include the eight-hour day, an increase in wages, an end to discrimination against Negroes, young workers and women, equal pay for equal work, opposition to the speed-up system, unemployment insurance and recognition of the Union. These demands are virtually identical with those advanced by the United Textile Workers and the Associated Silk Workers which, under the influence of the Muste group, have recently voted to amalgamate on the eve of the strike which they planned to call in their own name on August 1.

The Paterson strike follows directly upon the heels of textile strikes under N. T. W. U. leadership in Providence, Central Falls and Pawtucket, R. I., and a silk workers strike under the A. F. of L. in Allentown, Pa. All these movements are indicative of the deep ferment of dissatisfaction among the textile workers in the country with the conditions of misery and intense exploitation to which they are subjected, and speak eloquently about the splendid opportunities offered to the labor movement to mobilize the workers on a broad scale for resistance to the ruthless capitalist offensive. How seriously undermined the living standards of the Paterson workers are, is evidenced by the fact that they are compelled—in order to live—to demand an increase of about one-third in wages.

The conflict in strike dates resulting from the division of the ranks into two antagonistic unions, presents a serious handicap to the progress and success of the strike. There is no doubt that the joint leadership of the U. T. W. and the A. S. W. has demonstrated a great vacillation and protraction in the negotiations with the manufacturers—in face of the fact that the bulk of the workers involved are keyed up to a high point of enthusiasm for the strike The N. T. W., on the other hand, is not showing itself capable of measuring up to the complicated situation. The attempt to hasten the strike by precipitous actions will not prove to be the best way of mobilizing the majority of the workers for a successful strike struggle.

What is further already evident, on the first day of the strike as this is being written (Wednesday), is that the N. T. W. cannot expect to make the necessary progress by a pure and simple "head-on collision" with the reformist unions in the field. The response on the first day has been very limited, embracing only a very small minority of the 20,000 workers. As a matter of fact, less than 1 000 have thus far responded to the suddenly issued N. T. W. call, although the prospects for broadening the strike are still excellent, making it possible to overcome initial blunders.

The N. T. W. dares not repeat the mistake made in the mine fields by the official Left wing, particularly since its application in the Paterson situation involves even more pointed dangers. The combined membership of the U. T. W. and the A. S. W. is in the vicinity of 3,000. The N. T. W. has little better than a small core in Paterson. This situation dictates the immediate need of initiating and carrying through a genuine united front policy. To confine themselves to the purely formal, empty gestures of the united front "only from below" would be the greatest mistake the Communists could make. Even more than in the coal fields, where the rivalry is not so direct, the N. T. W. must call upon the other union organizations for a united front conference, to coordinate all the forces, to seek a joint strike committee in which each side on an equal plane, shall have full freedom of criticism and action. This is the road to winning the workers to the side of the militants, the road to a successful conclusion of the strike. Up to now, only the motions of a "united front" have been gone through, with the usual empty results. The workers cannot be deceived by formalities: the realities must be given to them.

In the united front, the workers will learn through their **own experience**—not by unimpressive denunciation—which of the contending forces in the trade unions offer them the best program and the best leadership. From such a process of learning, the Left wing can and should have nothing at all to fear.

The strike is just at its beginning. The coming weeks are rich with opportunities which, unfortunately, have been so cavalierly passed up by the Left wing in the past, and at this very moment are being passed up in the mine fields. The N. T. W. in Paterson must seize the opportunity.

—M. S.

Pittsburgh Convention Shows Need For Unity of Fighting Miners

PITTSBURGH.—

To those who contend that the coal strike is over, or that the National Miners Union is dead, the national conference held in Pittsburgh, July 15, is a living refutation. 682 delegates from 270 mines representing a total of 45,491 striking miners, according to the report, voiced their approval of the militant policies of the N. M. U. The conference was completly animated by a fighting spirit. Miners fresh from the strike battlefront of West Virginia Pennsylvania, and Kentucky, representing all nationalities, black and white, young and old, came to Pittsburgh, demonstrating their determination to continue, to spread and to win in their heroic struggle against starvation.

A Militant Conference

Miner after miner took the floor, painting in no uncertain terms the intolerable conditions which brought on the strike. The ridiculously low wages outright robbery in the mine and in the company store, unemployment rampant and poverty stalking all over the coal fields, have driven the miners into open revolt. And added to this is the treacherous role of the U. M. W. of A. Only a deaf man could fail to hear from the speeches of the rank and file, the undying hatred Lewis and Co. have earned for themselves in the hearts of the coal diggers. The real fighting note of the conference was struck by the picturesque Kentucky delegation. Fresh from the hills of Daniel Boone's country, they let loose a veritable flow of "Kentucky oratory" upon the conference. Their defiance of the thugs and gunmen cloaked with the badge of "constituted authority" their do-or-die-win-the-strike attitude, stirred the conference. The delegates of Harlan, Kentucky, to a man, pledged their unreserved support to the National Miners Union. This marks a big step forward.

One fact, no one could fail to notice—the growing political consciousness of the mine workers: Peals of stormy applause greeted all remarks however casual, on the Soviet Union, Communism, and a workers' government in the U. S. A. Even the American backwoodsmen of Kentucky did not fail to express their disapproval of the social system. The name of Reds, they said, didn't "scarce" them at all. Judging from this conference, it is clear that the American working class will "jump a few stages" as they make their way to Communism.

The purpose that the conference should have really had was given in the words of Foster: to realize "a broad enough united front to include miners irrespective of political creed or union affiliation." This is undeniably an advance for the N. M. U. from its sectarian position of a year ago. Its value consists in the realization that there are tens of thousands of miners, in Illinois, Kanawha, West Virginia and in the anthracite, under influence other than that of the N. M. U. These miners can only be won over to common struggle through a correct application of the united front tactic. And here lies the hitch in the whole policy of the N. M. U. Borich correctly advocated the building of Left wing minorities in the anthracite U. M. W. A., etc. (shades of the "third period"!). But Left wing minorities have their great strength just in so far as they use the tactic of the united front. How is this united front to be accomplished? From below! "No collusion with fakers"; only rank and file committees, representing all unions, was continually emphasized by Foster, Borich, and Co. Keeney betrayed the West Virginia miners; Howat left the Illinois miners in the lurch; all the other progressives are fakers. Therefore, no united front with them. The first part of the reasoning concerning the progressives is absolutely correct. But the second part does not follow at all.

A Fosterite "United Front"

The results of this policy are already apparent. The conference was ostensibly called as a united front gathering. It invited rank and file miners from all groups to attend—at the same time branding their leadership as fake. But it could not be a genuine united front since they were merely invited to attend the N. M. U. convention. The result was that not a single delegate from the Kanawha section of West Virginia, not a solitary representative from the Belleville conference in Illinois (the only Illinois delegates represented a group from the struck Orient mines) a few delegates representing only a handful of those organized in the anthracite.

Instead of these "brilliant leaders" taking note of this remarkable signpost of an incorrect policy, they continue to plunge deeper in the same wrong direction. The same negligible results can already be foreseen from the statement of the program committee, calling upon the "West Virginia miners to fight the Keeney leadership, as tools of the bosses, and to set up rank and file unity committees". It was recognized by miner after miner that thousands were still under the influence of the "progressives". Yet the leadership refused to take any cognizance of this fact beyond name-calling and the mythical "united front

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Pointed Questions To The I.L.D.

Another week has been added to the period of silence which the officials of the International Labor Defense have maintained on the case of Leon Goodman and Bernard Morgenstern, two Left Oppositionists who have been convicted under the notorious Flynn Anti-Sedition Act of Pennsylvania.

The August number of the **Labor Defender** just off the press announces an "Amnesty Campaign" by the I. L. D., with conferences between August 2 and August 8, and demonstrations on the Sacco-Vanzetti anniversary August 22. The various victims of capitalist persecution are listed: Communists, syndicalists, Negro workers, A. F. of L. men and others. Goodman and Morgenstern are deliberately omitted. Why? Solely because in addition to the "crime of violating" the Flynn Act, they have committed the great "crime" in the eyes of the Stalinist officials of the I. L. D. of belonging to the Left Opposition!

We ask: Is the I. L. D., built up as a non-party class defense movement, to be transformed officially into an organization defending only those who agree with the present leadership of the Communist party? Are other endangered militants to be left in the lurch? Let the workers demand an immediate reckoning from Engdahl, Maurer and Co. Let the party and I. L. D. members demand that the I. L. D. take over the defense in reality, that it discontinue its disgraceful conduct which can only provoke the joy and satisfaction of the capitalist prosecutor.

In the meantime funds are urgently needed for the defense. Money should be sent to K. M. Whitten, treasurer of the Morgenstern-Goodman Defense Committee, 2041 Appletree Street, Phila, Pa.

TERRORINCHINA

Arrest Opposition Heads

13 Communists in the Hands of the Butcher Chiang Kai-Shek

We have just received the following alarming news from one of the Shanghai comrades of the Chinese Bolshevik-Leninists, dated June 23, 1931:

"After such a long silence, I am writing to you at the most difficult moment that the Chinese Opposition is experiencing. On May 21-22, thirteen comrades were arrested by the Chinese police in Shanghai. Six of the comrades are members of the Central Committee of the United Opposition (the national congress of the various Opposition groups was held on May 1-2). Four of the comrades are members of the standing committee, and there thus remains only one member of the committee (comrade C.) We were about to start work systematically after so long a split in our ranks. Our united organization was hardly in existence ofr a month when this severe blow was dealt us. We are compelled to restore our organization under the most difficult conditions of dark reaction. The event occured because a traitor who was formerly a responsible comrade went to betray us to the police. We are sure to make up for the loss we have suffered this time. In answer to the blow of our enemies and the traitors, our comrades will double and treble their efforts to close our ranks and heal our sores . . .

—N. S.

* * * *

The terrible information which our comrade communicates to us follows directly upon the news published by the **Daily Worker** of the martyrdom at the hands of the Chinese nationalist assassins of the secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, comrade Hsiang Chung Fei. The sanguinary terror which the counter-revolutionary Chinese bourgeoisie has conducted against the proletariat and peasantry, claiming its victims by the tens of thousands leaves little room for doubt that the arrested comrades, including the leaders of the Left Opposition, are in imminent danger of execution—providing that this punishment for their revolutionary devotion has not already been visited upon them by the butchers of Chiang Kai-Shek. The victims of the Chinese white terror, practised by a barbaric bourgeoisie which mounted to power four years ago on the stirrup held for it by Stalin, Bucharin, Martinov and other Mensheviks, must be protected from the Chiangs and Wang Chin Weis by an iron ring of solidarity of all the workers in the world. The voice of protest must sound so loudly that it compels the executioners to release their prey.

Demand the release of the imprisoned Chinese revolutionists!

Demand an end to the horrible white terror of the Chinese bourgeoisie and their imperialist patrons of America, England, France, and Janan!

LEON TROTSKY

Result of Spanish Elections

The Victory of the Socialists and the Tasks of the Communists

1. I have before me a Turkish paper (in French) of July 1, containing the first news about the Spanish elections. Really, everything is happening up to now in a strictly "foreseen" order. The slide to the Left has gone on with a particular regularity. Let us hope that our Spanish comrades will analyze the results of the elections very carefully, on the basis of materials. We must find out how the workers voted, especially the anarcho-syndicalists. In certain regions, the answer should flow clearly from the election statistics. It is extremely important, of course, to know how the peasants voted in the various provinces. At the same time, all the "agrarian programs" which were presented by the various parties in all the corners of the country must be gathered together. All this is an urgent and a very important work.

The Socialist Victory

2. As was to be expected, the socialists won a great victory. This is the crux of the parliamentary situation. The socialist leaders consider themselves happy over the fact that they have not the majority in the Cortes and that their coalition with the bourgeoisie is thus justified by parliamentary statistics. The socialists do not want to take power because they are afrald, and not without cause, of the socialist government becoming a stage towards the dictatorship of the proletariat. It follows from the speech of Prieto that the socialists have decided to support the coalition so long as the proletariat can be restrained, in order later, when the pressure of the workers becomes too strong, to pass over into the opposition under some radical pretext or other, and to leave it to the bourgeoisie to discipline and to crush the workers. In other words, we have before us a variant of Ebert and of Tseretelli. Let us remember that Ebert's line succeeded while Tseretelli's failed and that in both cases the strength of the Communist party and its policy played a decisive role.

3. We must immediately denounce the plan of the socialists (this political game of falling back), confounding them in every question. This of course holds true above all for the Spanish Left Opposition. But this is not enough. There must be a clear political slogan which corresponds to the character of the present stage of the Spanish revolution. The results of the elections make this slogan absolutely clear: the workers must break up the coalition with the bourgeoisie and compel the socialists to take power. The peasants must help the workers, if they want to have the land.

4. The socialists will say that they cannot give up the coalition because they have not the majority in the Cortes. Our conclusion must be: demand the election of a genuinely democratic Cortes

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IN THE INTERNATIONAL OF LABOR

Reviews and News of the Working Class and Revolutionary Movements

In Spain

Day by Day

A lecture tour on the Russian revolution and the situation in Spain has just been held by comrade Nin in the Asturias. The Asturias are an outstandingly miners' district, where about 30,000 miners work. Nin arrived on the day when the strike broke out. The movement was launched by the revolutionary trade union, led by the Communists and the syndicalists. The strikers demanded especially the seven-hour day, established before the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and abolished by the latter. The movement thus had a very acute political character and put to the wall the Provisional Government and above all the socialists. Those who a few years ago exercized hegemony among the miners, openly sabotaged the strike, declaring that the strikers were "enemies of the republic" and directly collaborated with the Guardia Civil in order to guarantee the "freedom to work". **The socialists themselves opened fire upon the strikers** and wounded three women. This contributed enormously to undermining the influence of the reformists who can no longer claim to represent the workers. The strike was effectively followed by more than seventy percent of the miners and was concluded upon the promise of the government to find a solution. In reality, the strike was lost, but it dealt a very serious blow to the reformists and strengthened the prestige of the Communists who led the movement.

The secretary of the trade union is an excellent Communist, enjoying a great prestige among the miners and who does not conceal his sympathies for the Left Opposition. The Stalinists have been unable to do a thing against him for they would have encountered the most energetic resistance on the part of the miners. The same also holds true in the case of the secretary of the Youth, who is an avowed Oppositionist and an excellent young militant, working in the arms factory of Oviedo.

Influence of Left Opposition

The Communists have the dominating influence in the district, except for Gijon, where the anarcho-syndicalists prevail. Their state of mind is that of a determined opposition to the party leadership and entirely favorable to unity. But the prestige of the International and of "Moscow" still exercizes a great influence upon them, which prevents them from taking the decisive steps. They have a very pronounced sympathy for us and comrade Loredo is achieving a work in favor of the Opposition the fruits of which we shall soon see.

The lectures of Nin had an enormous success and everywhere a great number of party members came to speak with him at length. At Gijon, for instance, they came in group at the end of the second lecture and one of them said to Nin, with the obvious approval of the others: "Even though you are expelled from the party, we consider you as a comrade and as a revolutionist," "Trotsky must be reinstated into the party so that we may work together." But they still believe naively that the Committee of the Spanish Party and the Comintern will finish by understanding their error and will stretch out their hands to us. These comrades have undertaken to enter into a regular correspondence with us.

On June 7, the first conference of the Opposition took place at Madrid, where the collaboration of all our comrades was fortunately assured on the basis of the resolutions adopted. The results of the conference are excellent. We are now working with great hopes in the future.

The Opposition and Maurin

Profiting by his stay in Madrid for our conference, comrade Nin delivered a lecture at the "Ateneo" on the "present second stage of the Spanish revolution". The "Ateneo" today plays a great role lectures delivered from this tribune have a repercussion throughout Spain. The first Communist lecture delivered from this tribune, from which the Communists had not yet spoken, was by Maurin, leader of the Catalonian Communist Federation. It was a real disaster. It was the speech of radical petty bourgeois. He made a very harsh criticism of the Provisional Government, but he completely forgot the proletariat and the party. As a perspective, he only indicated a . . . convention in which the leading role would be played by . . . the Left elements of the "Ateneo". We were all very much disappointed. Maurin is theoretically very inconsistent, but his lecture was even beneath him.

Nin delivered a lecture the following day. The interest it aroused was immense. The police held back the workers who wanted to enter when the hall was already filled. The comrades were enthused by Nin's lecture and considered it a great victory. Nin replied to Maurin, who had said some absolutely inadmissible things, of which these are the most important:

1. The Spanish revolution must be national and not servilely copy the Russian experience; the Comintern has failed in China, in Germany, in Bulgaria ad in Esthonia because it . . . wanted to apply the Russian experience there (!)

2. In Spain, there are **four** revolutions to be made: the economic revolution, the political revolution, the national revolution and the religious revolution.

3. The Catalonian Communists declare themselves to be separatists.

4. The Catalonian Federation is accused of being "Trotskyist" by the Stalinists and of being "Stalinist" by the Trotskyists; the Federation is in disagreement with the policy of the C. I. in Spain and cannot declare its solidarity with the "Trotskyists" because they . . . "believe that the Five Year Plan is the victory of the revolution. . . ." (!)

Nin then showed that the revolution had failed in China, in Germany, etc., just because the Russian experience has been forgotten, that in Spain there were not four revolutions to be made, but only one; that the Communists cannot declare themselves to be **separatists**, but that they must confine themselves to recognizing the right of the peoples to dispose of themselves to the point of separation; and finally, that if the Federation was accused of being "Trotskyist" by the Stalinists and of being Stalinist by the Trotskyists, it was because it had no precise political line.

The Relation of Forces

The Madrid Opposition is doing good work and has a pretty substantial influence in the local autonomous Communist section. We have organized a second lecture tour (at Madrid and in the Asturias). The monthly review has been well received. A few words on the party and on the Catalonian Federation. The relationship of forces has not changed radically during recent weeks. The fortress of the official party is still Seville. They have not the strength they claim, but it is more than they have in the rest of the country. At Madrid, the local independent section should have from 500 to 600 members and publishes a weekly, **La Antorcha.** The party group should have about from 70 to 80 members. In Catalonia, the official party has made no essential gains, except for a few dozen unemployed, drawn over by the demagogic agitation of the Stalinists. The Catalonian Federation progresses. Three months ago it had almost 1,000 dues paying members. Now it has 2,700. The circulation of **La Batalla** is more than 20,000. Its orientation remains irresolute, undefined. At the Unity Congress, which will be held in August, there will inevitably come forward a new party. The idea of unification is very popular throughout the country. But we encounter a great obstacle: the official party and the C. I. What an enormous responsibility these people bear! The letter of comrade Trotsky to the Political Bureau has produced an excellent impression. We must pursue with redoubled energy our work for unification. It is a question of life or death for our movement.

We must also give a firm ideological orientation to the proletariat in the revolutionary situation through which we are passing. The anarcho-syndicalists have fallen into a frightful confusion. The Stalinists are conducting a nonsensical policy. The Catalonian Federation and the autonomous section of Madrid have not, truth to tell, any policy. The Opposition thus has an enormous task to fulfill in this sense. It will fulfill it. The review, **Communismo**, can play a great role in this.

Madrid, June 23, 1931.

Clearing Away the Petty Bourgeois Fog

On the Road to the Proletarian Revolution in Spain

(Continued from last issue)

No, the Spanish monarchy does not constitute a feudal state. The foundation of the Spanish monarchic state, beginning with September 1923, is not the property of the aristocracy considered as such, but rather the property of the capitalist bourgeoisie. It is of little import that the aristocracy, old or new, has preserved itself in the warp and woof of the state. In the dominant spheres of the state machinery the semi-feudal remains are effective only by the fact that they are in the hands of the bourgeoisie, and not of the aristocrats. The Spanish monarchic state functioned as a capitalist apparatus, and not for aristocratic caste privileges.

Alfonso was nothing but a functionary in the service of the exploitation of monopolistic capital, for which "work" Primo de Rivera was the broom which swept away the remnants of the unclean aristocracy, putting the whole state machinery into the hands of industrial and financial capitalism. It is true that the Spanish countryside requires very urgently a revolution to liquidate large landed property. The peasants will have to repartition the land, violently depriving its owners of all their privileges and of their present semi-feudal possessions.

The "Democratic Revolution"

In this problem due to the backwardness of the Spanish land, there is something of the "democratic revolution", But a democratic revolution—led by whom? By the petty bourgeois intellectuals? We are not today, in spite of the "doctrine" of Marcelino Domingo and company, in the epoch of the Tennis Court meeting. What we have in Spain today is quite different from what we had in France in '89. At that time, the bourgeoisie was the revolutionary vanguard which had behind it the whole peasant mass submitted to the cruel yoke of the feudal state, constituted out of the aristocracy, the church, and crowned by the absolute monarchy by divine right. At that time, the bourgeois ideology was indeed the living and dynamic theory of the revolutionary needs of a class rising to power. Therefore the peasant, led by the bourgeoisie could carry tchrough his democratic tasks and destroy the feudal state. This happened in France a century and a half ago. Since then, things have changed "just a little bit", even for Spain. The bourgeoisie is no longer the champion of the "national" revolution. Jealous of its privileges, it lives entrenched in the fortresses of the state, devoting all its energy not to the liberation of the peasanry bu o heir exploiation. From this exploitation, it draws not a few resources for the sustaining of its domination. The formula for the peasantry is no longer: **With the bourgeoisie for the destruction of the feudal state,** but rather: **With the proletariat for the destruction of the bourgeois state.** How can the bourgeoisie, big or small, be the initiator of the peasant democratic revolution?

There is an identity with the Spanish revolution except for differences of a secondary order, in the Russian revolution of October. The destruction of the state is begun with a feeble capitalism in power. This capitalism, without energy of its own, product of an anaemic bourgeoisie which never had either revolutionary ability or courage, finds itself attacked by a double revolution: the proletarian revolution in the cities: the democratic revolution in the country. In the fact that these two revolutions coincide against the capitalist state in full decomposition, lies a whole world of possibilities for victory, for with it the revolution acquires grandiese proportions.

In vain will be the efforts of the democratic petty bourgeoisie to take the substance out of the character of the revolution, juggling away the coming stages and setting down certain limits. The struggle is opened against the capitalist state, before which no oher force can arise but that of the industrial proletar ing for the possession of the land. It iat, drawing with it the peasantry fight- is not the feudal state that we have before us but the capitalist bourgeoisie with all its arms. We have here no slaves to liberate from the yoke of aristocratic despotism, but workers of town and country who seek to burst the chains of bourgeois expliottation. We are not marching towards the conquest of the rights of the bourgeoisie citizen, but towards the destruction of the wage slavery which is based upon these contemptible rights.

The extemporaneous, anachronistic and ridiculously messianic attitude of petty bourgeois idealism would move one to laughter were it not for the fact that it entails a counter-revoluionary maneuver. It is a question of throwing sand in the eyes of the workers so that they may not see the ground beneath their feet. This is the most suble and dangerous game of the bourgeoisie. The idealistic demagogy of the intellectual, of the petty bourgeoisie easily grips the working masses. A good proof of this is the obvious influence which social reformism and anarcho-syndicalism—the two opium smokers whom the bourgeoisie has installed in the workers' camp — exercize over the workers.

The Need for a Party

It is a very arduous task to get the proletariat to judge the social struggle from a strictly class standpoint, a condition without which the working masses cannot get to the bottom of all the consequences. It is true that the proletariat has its best political school in this very revoluion. The steps of the great struggle will be made progressively, clarifying the atmosphere of the revolution and eliminating all the falsehoods that stand in the way of the fighters. But this is not enough. The proletariat, in order to win, requires an energetic, gifted and disciplined leading party; a party that knows seriously how to calculate the greatness of its mission; a party capable of appreciating at every given moment its own forces and those of the enemy; a party that knows how to throw out of its midst mercilessly, all the demagogic fanfarronade of ignorance; a party which is not amenable to the adulation of incompetents or to the intrigues of arrivists or the struggle among the militants for degenerate and contemptible motives; a party, finally which appreciates the merit of each of its men for the intrinsic value which he holds for the revolution and not for the degree of servile obedience which he pretends to have. There is no doubt that this party can only be the Communist party. Unfortunately, everything still remains to be done. We must dispel dangerous illusion if disaster is to be avoided. The Communist party must be an iron weapon, but the truth is that right now it is nothing more than a wooden sword. To the proletariat which, its all, we must expound the naked in the future struggles, will have to risk truth. The responsibility of the people that find themselves today at the head of the Communist party is truly enormous. They think that the revolution can be a game of chance.

If all the objective conditions are splendid for a future triumph of the proletarian revolution in Spain, one cannot say the same about the capacity and organization of the revolutionary party, the Communist party. And the evil is not the present incompetence. The Spanish Communist Party can and must organize in such a way that in the relatively proximate future it will acquire the strength and effectiveness that is lacking today. What is to be done? Change radically all the measures of procedure. Depose this false doctrine artifically imposed upon the party, eliminate the sectarian policy which is ordered from above. It must be stated that the anti-Marxist muse of the political philosophy of Stalin is not the most appropriate to inspire the proletariat with the dialectic of triumph.

Bilbao, April 1931

—ESTEBAN BILBAO.

ON THE WORKERS' FRONT

After the Pocketbook Makers' Strike

It is over a month since the S. P. fakers in the Pocketbook Workers Union put over the treacherous agreement in Cooper Union, in spite of the fact the majority of the workers were against it. The tellers, who were a part of the machine, could not count up more than a small majority vote cast for the agreement. When the administration saw that they had only a small majority of 45 votes, they added 350 votes from New Jersey locals.

The administration was victorious over the workers due to the fact that the "third period" politicians allowed a vote to be taken by hands, instead of putting up a fight for a referendum vote. This mistake cannot be overlooked. The workers are paying the price already and they will continue to pay if such mistakes are not corrected in the future.

The Agreement

Now let us review in brief the terms of the agreement signed between the leather goods manufacturers and the union. The chief demands of the union were: (1) a 40 hour, 5 day week; (2) unemployment insurance paid by the bosses and administered by the unions; (3) to regulate the scale of wages in order to raise the underpaid workers. The employers made counter-demands, such as a 25 percent wage reduction, a 20 percent reorganization during the year, and a joint employment bureau.

The new agreement gave the employers more than they wanted! They got a reduction in wages of from 10 to 15 percent, 10 percent reorganization, which goes to arbitration, a joint employment bureau to go to the impartial chairman within two months for a decision. The employers will have extra demands they never asked for at the first conferences. These are: an extra helper, which means that a pocketbook mechanic who worked with only one helper under the old agreement will now have to work with two, which will undermine the conditions of the pocketbook makers. A board of standards means to speed up the workers and to adjust prices to meet the needs of the bosses.

The workers, on the other hand, get under the new agreement, about which the administration raves so much, unemployment insurance for which he or she will have to pay two and a half percent of the wages and the employers will pay the same amount. Dues and taxes will be taken off this fund, so you can imagine how much the workers will get from the unemployment insurance!

This fake agreement could not be made by the bartender, Barnet Wolff, and his gang. They needed a wizard to bring such a wonderful agreement. They found him. This genius and renegade from Communism, Dr. L. Hendin, is an expert lately among the S. P. **Forward** gang, investigating one group of crooks against another, in order to rob and fake the workers more and more.

Do you think that this faker made the job because he is a philanthropist? Oh no! There will be the administration of the unemployment insurance fund which will pay a nice salary. So you can see why this Dr. Hendlin was so much interested in the Pocketbook Workers Union.

Do you think the bosses are satisfied with the agreement? No! They are demanding more and more and the union officers are giving them . . . more and more.

Something new has developed in the industry since the agreement were signed. Employers in business for years open their shops again by changing their first or second name and thus become new employers. When the workers go to the union office, they are told by the salesman-manager that they are not entitled to the jobs because it is a new firm. This is done by the union officers to help the bosses bring wages down to the scale provided in the new agreement. This is done because there are workers who still earn $50 to $55 a week. When their shops open again as new firms, and the boss has a right to take on new workers, he will not pay more than the scale, which is at present $44 for mechanics, especially now, when there is so much unemployment in the trade. This shows how the union misleaders help the employers on destroy the union.

What is to be done in order to oust these misleaders? (1) The workers must demand from the officials that membership meetings should be called (2) At these meetings, to demand a reckoning on the sellout. (3) To oust them as our representatives. This can be achieved when the Stalinists unite the rank and file committee with other revolutionary and sincere progressive groups in the union. I am sure that with united action, the workers can get rid of these officials who betrayed them. Then, through the rank and file, the workers will be in a position to build a union for the workers and not for misleaders.

—N. DAVIS.

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In France

Economic Crisis and the Strikes

(Continued from last issue)

The compulsory contributions of the workers to social insurance marked the first wage decreases. The party and the C. G. T. U. finally issued the correct slogan "against the workers' contribution", after a series of vacillations, during which they sometimes demanded the struggle against the whole social insurance law, or else the creation of insurance treasuries by the trade unions for the purpose of carrying out the law. These vacillations, together with the policy of the "third period" hurt the revolutionary organizations tremendously, and when they finally issued the slogan "Against the workers' contribution", they no longer found any strong echo in the masses. In the North, the influence exercized by the reformists through the communal administrations, cooperatives, sport leagues, workers' singing societies, etc., is very extensive. They came forward as the most zealous agitators for the law which they had themselves demanded with a great vocal display. In order to put an end to the dissatisfaction which arose as a result of the withholding of five percent of the wage by the bosses for the compulsory insurance contribution, the reformist organizations of the North raised the demand for a wage increase of one-fourth of a franc per hour (about 1 cent), that is, they accepted basically the payment of contributions by the workers. The great majority of the workers took up the struggle for one-fourth of a franc "wage increase". The C. P. F. and the C. G. T. U., in spite of the relatively favorable conditions, did not understand how to establish the united front, and instead they issued the slogan of "one-half of a franc wage increase. Without any hindrance from the revolutionary trade unions, the reformists had a free hand for their parliamentary horse trade with the bosses and were able after a few weeks of struggle to strangle the strike with impunity. They abandoned the one-fourth of a franc wage increase and accepted a sort of "bonus for steady work"; the workers who have worked in the factory regularly for more than six months, receive the insurance contribution as compensation from the boss each week.

Failure of the Communist Party

Among the workers there were splendid moods for struggle. In sharp contrast to the conduct of the reformist leaders, who constantly pushed for negotiations, they repeatedly effected an energetic resistance in conflicts with the armed forces. At no stage in the struggle did the C. P. F. and the C. G. T. U. succeed, through the realization of the united front, to draw closer to the masses of the fighters and in this manner to win over broad sections of the working class to the Communist slogans. The result was a new ebb of their influence; the revolutionary trade unions lost heavily in membership. A municipal council election in Tourcoing, fourteen days after the end of the strike, showed a substantial decline in the votes given to the party.

During the course of this, the capitalist offensive against the miners in the Northern department, that is, against two-thirds of the union membership, opened up in all fury. The announcement of an impending wage reduction evoked a strong dissatisfaction among the miners. Extremely favorable opportunities for an action were at hand. Here too the reformist influence was appreciable: out of a total of 200,000 miners about 6,000 members fall to the revolutionary and about 50,000 members to the reformist union, the latter being the strongest trade union in France. From the very first day, it should have been the task of the Communists on the basis of the generally raised demand "against any wage reductions" to set up the united front. To propose to the reformist organizations a joint action, a joint struggle—that should have been the first step that the revolutionary union should have taken. The Centrists vacillated back and forth so that the reformist trade union leaders were able to carry out their shameless treachery and consent to a wage reduction without a serious revolt of the workers replying to their crime. The miners had no confidence in the revolutionary union. Finally, the C. G. T. U. found itself compelled—so as not to discredit itself forever in the eyes of its members and sympathizers—to call the strike itself. Only a minority of 25,000 miners followed its call, a vanguard whose struggle was followed with sympathy by the whole proletariat, but which was unable to convert this sympathy into deeds. After a week, the workers had to return to the mines with a smaller wage. As to the relationship of forces between the reformist and revolutionary unions, the strike only contributed unessential changes. Yet there has rarely been a more favorable opportunity to extend the influence of the revolutionary organizations over tens of thousands of workers who had seen the betrayal of the reformists. The impotence of the C. G. T. U., however, did not permit to separate these workers from their old organizations.

In the C. P. F. as well as in the C. G. T. U., the discussion on these strike movements was prevented. (To be continued).

Paris PIERRE FRAN

Thesis for the Pre-Conference Discussion

The outstanding feature of the present situation is the world-wide character of the economic crisis, more severe in its effects than any other manifestation of the anarchy of capitalism since the precipitation of the world war of 1914. Eloquently testifying to the fact that capitalist economy today is predominantly world economy, that the prevailing mode of production and distribution has entered into the most violent conflict with the needs and interests of the masses of society, that the development of the world's productive forces is acutely incompatible with the innumerable national boundaries that restrict it, the crisis has swept over every important country in the world with the ruthlessness of a social epidemic. No country that moves actively within the orbit of world economy is immune from the convulsions of the crisis. Following the deflating collapse of the American stock market and the dizzy industrial decline that has ensued to this day with almost uninterrupted regression, the crisis has wracked the economic or political life of every important European, Latin American, and Asiatic nation. Even France, which enjoyed a relatively favorable conjuncture for a number of years following the stabilization of the franc, has been drawn into the maelstrom of decline.

The Soviet Union, too, which has not been and cannot be liberated from the pressure of world economy, has felt the effects of the international crisis, to a far more limited extent than the capitalist countries, it is true, but it has been influenced by them nevertheless. The radical international decline of commodity prices has seriously affected Soviet exports, that is, its growing connection with the world market, which becomes an increasingly important factor, in the development of its machinofacture. Yet, the successes and advances of the Soviet Union stand out even more prominently in contrast to the universal anarchy and decline of capitalist economy. In the society of tomorrow, despite its isolation, despite the antagonism of the rest of the world, despite all the tremendous difficulties and barriers placed in its path by the world bourgeoisie and by the interior deformation of the principles upon which it was founded, progress is being made at a rate never attained under anarchic capitalism. Even in its embryonic stage, the superiority of planned production and distribution, the advances towards the socialist ideal, are being made clear to every greater millions throughout the world. Its very existence serves as a challenge to the parasitic, decadent social system under which the rest of the world is laboring. Regardless of the imperialist dangers that threaten it from without, and the Thermidorian and Bonapartist corrosion which menaces it at home, its progress in laying the foundation stones for a socialist economy, the advances made in the field of industrialization and the reorganization of its terribly backward agriculture, are a milestone in the forward march of humanity which capitalist society, torn to bits by insoluble contradictions, cannot ever hope to reach.

The crisis in capitalism manifests itself economically in the violent disruption of industrial life and the universal decline in production; in the general precipitous fall of commodity prices; in the radical reduction of world trade; in the aggravation of the insoluble agrarian crisis, a sore that has festered since the end of the war and impoverished the agricultural population throughout the world; in the enfeeblement of the monetary systems of numerous countries (China, Spain, etc.); and, what is of the greatest consequence, in the constitution of an international army of unemployed numbering more than 10,000,000 in the United States alone, and forming the supplement to those still engaged in industry whose wages and standard of life are systematically cut down.

The political manifestations of the crisis are equally universal. The restiveness of the masses who feel the crisis most acutely and seek a way out of the bonds of misery, combined with the maneuvers of the imperialist powers to jockey themselves into a more favorable position on the restricted world market, have produced violent outbreaks and even revolutionary uprisings in the most widely separated parts of the world. Latin America has experienced a number of them recently. India, Indo-China, sections of China itself, the Philipines—all these are to be found in varying stages of politically rebellious activity. In Europe, a popular movement has driven the monarch from Spain and opened up the perspective of an even more far-reaching change. The pressure of economic difficulties has driven Germany and Austria to proclaim their unity openly, in a form (a customs union) which foreshadows a closer, more avowedly political union—despite the violent objections of their many neighbors. In Germany itself, the proletarian revolution is being inscribed on the agenda, and while the struggle for power between Bolshevism and Fascism appears to have reached a momentary stalemate, it still holds first place in German politics. As the crisis grows in breadth and depth, and all indications point in that direction, its political effects will assume sharper forms and come into ever more open and more revolutionary collision with the prevailing order.

The crisis has by no means exhausted its severity. On the contrary. The paroxysms experienced at the present time by the American imperialist colosssus are harbingers of even more convulsive tremors in the economic structure of Europe. It is not Europe that will issue out of the crisis at the costs of the United States; the prospect is rather summed up in the contrary. The key to the problem of Europe versus America, the central problem of capitalist world politics, is at present held by American imperialism, with its position of dominant economic and financial power and its tremendous resources. The United States confronts Europe (and Latin America) as the main creditor nation of the world. Both of them confront a world economy in which the international market, both domestic and foreign, is not only limited but progressively diminishing. The stupendous war and post-war debts which converted the U. S. into the principal creditor nation of the world have become one of the most powerful levers at work to undermine even that fragile stabilization achieved in the second half of the last decade. The debts (including interest and sinking fund charges) owed directly to the United States, or indirectly to it through other creditor nations which are America's debtors (e. g., England, France) can be paid only in gold, or through the acceptance of new credits, or in goods. The acceptance of new credits, the form adopted in Germany for four years following the initiation of the Dawes Plan, can no longer be pursued to such an extent—Germany's investment needs having diminished. Debt payments in gold are today even more difficult than ever before, and that not merely because of the inadequacy of the gold supply for this purpose. In the last two years alone, all of the new gold supply production available for monetary purposes has been absorbed by the United States and France. Half of the gold coming into these two countries has been taken from the gold reserves of the rest of the world. The principal source of debt payments is therefore left more than ever before to payment in goods.

It is here that the world domination of the United States appears in its unique form, in distinct contrast to the pre-war world hegemony of Great Britain, which at that time enjoyed the position of world banker and creditor. Before the war, the main creditor of the world was a free trade country, and the principal debtor countries were producers of raw materials whose exports could be absorbed by the creditor nations. Today, creditor and debtor nations are of similar economic structure, exporters chiefly of manufactured goods.

The raw materials producing countries, tormented by the crisis and saddled with foreign debts, are selling their commodities at low prices, and even below production costs in certain cases, in a desperate attempt to adjust themselves to the pressure of the situation, which is accentuated by the general rise of tariff barriers throughout the world.

The industrial countries are in an equally disastrous dilemma. The domestic market everywhere has been narrowed by the fall in the purchasing power of the masses which the fall in commodity prices has not arrested because of the widespread unemployment and the international wage-slashing campaign. The domestic market of one country being the foreign market of another, the export figures of these industrial nations have been cut down radically. The complement to this process is the decrease in imports, spurred on in many countries by the hope of thus maintaining the favorable balance of trade which may enable them to honor their debtor's obligations. This task of Sisyphus is made doubly difficult in the present crisis, which has brought in its train such a sharp decline in commodity prices throughout the world. It has been estimated that the fall in prices on the world market has raised the gold value of payments provided for under the Young Plan for reparations to such an extent that they are made equal to the payments fixed under the Dawes plan, which the Young plan was to ameliorate for Germany.

It is these conditions, which lie at the base of the tortuous situation in Europe, that the plan recently proposed by Hoover for a war debts-reparations holiday seeks to cope with. But it cannot hope to eliminate the condition. Testifying though it does to the tremendous world power enjoyed by American imperialism, it can nevertheless only ameliorate Germany's ills for a brief span of time, while delivering a blow at France at the same time. It cannot solve the burning problems of the markets, of the anarchic disruption of industrial life in Europe, it cannot lay the axe to the roots of the evils of the Versailles system and the perpetual conflicts among the capitalist powers of Europe itself. It may pull tighter the American noose around Europe and serve to delay a collapse in Germany which will only make it all the more convulsive when it comes

Given such a relation of forces, a recovery of the European section of world economy appears as a very distant prospect. Turn where it will, it always finds itself at the end of a blind alley, issue from which is blocked off by the economic and political domination of the United States. The attempts to solve its problems on a purely "European" basis are doomed to failure in advance. The unequal position on a "European scale" of the individual European countries reduces to a fantasy the Briand proposal for a capitalist United States of Europe. The American lion has reduced the numerous European jackals to a diminishing share of the world market. But portions of even this reduced share are fought for with an intensity that becomes steadily more hostile on the part of the European countries themselves, even though the pressusre of American imperialism urges them on to an economic unity of front which France seeks to establish under its hegemony through the Briand plan and Germany, through "Anschluss" with Austria. The reactionary utopianism of Briand does not at all signify that the economic and political unity of Europe is not necessary or that its establishment would not succeed in warding off the ruthless, reactionary advance of American imperialism, the decay of European economic life which it superinduces, and the untold misery of the masses that it involves. On the contrary. It signifies only that this unity cannot be established on a capitalist basis. But this unity, involving as it does the razing of the strangulating national frontiers and customs walls, the coordination of the scattered economic and industrial equipment and resources of the continent, a destruction of the malignant system of Versailles, a fusion with the Soviet Union, can only be accomplished on a revolutionary basis, that is, in the form of the Soviet United States of Europe.

In general, the crisis renders more acute the danger of a new world war. The imperialist conflict is maturing for a new open struggle to re-divide again the world's markets, the colonies, the spheres of influence, the sources of raw materials. All the elements of a new holocaust, more frightful than any that has ever preceded it, are present in the situation. The dominating fear of a new wave of proletarian revolutions that would inevitably follow it has, so to speak, been the principal retarding factor so far. But the fear of the prospect of working class retaliation is, by itself, an inadequate preventive of war. The inexorable pressnre of its increasingly acute contradictions reaches a point for imperialism where the demands and necessity for expansion overcome the fear of its consequences. The powder for the explosion is strewn loosely throughout the world. A new spark, a new obscure Sarajevo, is all that is required to set it off. Imbued with the prospect of war, each imperialist nation engages in feverish military, naval and aerial preparations and jockeys for advantageous positions. Behind the "disarmament" conferences the shipyards and armaments factories continue to work with unceasing regularity. The standing armies of today exceed those of the days prior to 1914. Navies grow more powerful, more modern, more efficient. Air fleets exceed in numbers and effectiveness the wildest dreams of the pre-1914 militarists. While the social democrats preach a treacherous disarmament to the workers, they lend their support to armaments for "the defense of the fatherland".

Shall it be a war between the imperialist powers themselves, or a war of the imperialist powers to overthrow the proletarian dictatorship and re-open the vast Russian market to capitalist exploitation? The war danger runs rapidly along both channels. The 1914 slogans of the war-mongers are being refurnished for the offensive against the Soviet Union: For "democracy", against "dictatorship"! On this score the Pope is at one with Hoover, the social democracy with the anarchists, Hindenburg with Hilferding with Hitler. All find themselves in their place along the bulwark of a moribund capitalist "civilization" which they are ready to defend—with the blood of capitalism's slaves—against the dawn of the new society. To mobilize the workers against the danger of imperialist war, to permeate them with the idea of the class war for emancipation against the imperialist war of enslavement, to rally them for the defense of the workers' fatherland—there lie imperative duties for the revolutionary Communists. And upon us, the American revolutionists, lies the double duty of the struggle against that imperialist power which, by its might and its rapaciousness, is bound to play a decisive, initiatory role in the coming conflict.

The Crisis in the United States and Its Effects on Labor

The present crisis is distinguished from many which preceded it in the history of capitalist production by its virtually planetary character. Not even the world war of 1914-1918 furnished a more illuminating example of the world character of present-day economy and politics than is supplied by the crisis wracking world capitalism today. In the complex system of capitalist world economy, each individual country occupies its specific place, intimately bound up though it is with all the other countries. The specific features of the crisis in the United States must therefore be viewed from the standpoint of the unique position it occupies in the world economic and political chain.

The crisis in the United States made its appearance after a period of prosperity unprecedented in economic history. Gifted with vast economic resources, a highly efficient industrial production, it had the added advantage of issuing out of the war the only major victor—its economic organization infinitely less disorganized than that of war-torn and debilitated Europe, its political life undisturbed by such intense revolutionary convulsions as ripped through the fabric of Continental society. In less than half a decade after the war, the economic center of gravity had shifted from Europe—more specifically, from England—to the United States, with the latter transformed from a debtor into a creditor nation, into the banker and industrialist of the world. With the termination of the early post-war crisis in the U. S., and the ebb of the revolutionary wave in Europe (1923-1924), the United States experienced a new period of expansion and consolidation, translated abroad in its assumption of the role of "stabilizer of Europe" and at home by the unparalleled "permanent prosperity period" of 1924-1928.

Prices on the stock market (averages of 25 industrial and 25 railroad stocks) swung from the 1924 low point of 82.26 to the unheard of peak towards the end of 1929 of 311.90. The index for "business activity" rose from little better than 85 in 1924 to over 110 towards the middle of 1929. In the same five years the growth of manufactures was expressed in the rise from the index figure of less than 250 in 1924 to more than 300 in 1929 (1899 equals 100). Such key branches of production as pig iron rose respectively from index figures of 67.5 (low point in July 1924) to 127.4 (high point in July 1929) and steel ingot output from 64.6 (low point in July 1924) to 132.2 (high point in June 1929), even though the European share of world production in these two industries had been increasing and that of the United States decreasing. The foreign trade of the United States maintained the figure for the war years of 1917-1918, and, in 1929, even surpassed them, even if with a less favorable trade balance. The foreign investments of American imperialism reached the fabulous sum of $16,-604,000,000, penetrating into every branch of the industrial and economic life of virtually every country in the world. Rising out of the unemployment trough into which it had fallen between 1920 and 1922, the U. S. was able, in this period, to maintain both the number of factory workers employed and the wage level at a fairly even keel, at least, without great fluctuations or declines.

The unfolding of this unprecedented period of relative prosperity coincided with an equally unprecedented period for the working class, above all for the organized labor movement. The great mass movements of the workers in the turbulent post-war year, manifested in strikes in basic industries involving hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of workers, gave way to the sinister dead calm of labor inaction, manifested in a sharp and steady decline of strikes. The trend towards independent political action, which at one time attained substantial proportions in the movement for a labor party, was absorbed by the petty bourgeois La Follette movement and finally dissolved into nothingness. The Communist movement began to experience a period of stagnation and decline. The steady advance of the Left wing and progressive movement inside the trade unions came to an abrupt halt and began to develop along a downward curve. The reactionary bureaucracy of the A. F. of L. became more soundly intrenched than ever, the resistance to it became weaker and less heeded. The philosophy of class collaboration and class peace penetrated every fibre of the labor movement, corrupting and undermining its militancy, poisoning its consciousness, rendering it impotent. It was lulled into a sleep of false security in the lap of a fantastic "permanent prosperity" in which the working class was allegedly sharing to an ever increasing extent and without the need of struggle. Under the weight of American imperialism's stupendous economic preponderance in world economy, combined with the illusions of "labor" banking, stock sharing, "permanent" high wages, and similar manifestations of this period, the bourgeois ideology of the "new capitalism" became the determining influence in the life and activity of the decisive bulk of the American working class, affecting not only such reactionary instruments of capitalism as the A. F. of L. and the Socialist party, but to a certain extent even the organized Communist movement

The appearance of the crisis, which disrupts the economic structure of the country, lays the basis for a profound and thorough-going change in this situation. The crisis broke out with all the greater sharpness precisely because the unique position of American capitalism enabled it to postpone for a time the precipitation of the crisis. The dynamic forces for the crisis had been accumulating for some time. The highly rationalized Ameriacn industry, the intense speed-up of production, the contraction of the domestic and the world market only served to hasten the process of overproduction which lies at the bottom of the present crisis. The highly-strung productive mechanism, with its accumulation of surplus commodities finally reached the congested end of the market funnel, resulting in the machinery of production and distribution collapsing for lack of room to expand. The water-logged securities market, hugely inflated out of all proportion to actual values, was driven into a corner and squeezed down by the pressure of the industrial decline.

The depth of the crisis in the United States may be seen by a comparison of present indices with those prevailing in the "boom" period. Prices on the stock market (stock averages mentioned above) collapsed in little over a year from the peak average of 311.90 (September 1929) to a low point of 135.43 (December 1930). The index for "business activity" fell from 110 (May 1929) to 75.7 (December 1930), not only marking a decline below the figure for 1924, but reaching a point lower than any other since March 1908! The index figure for manufactures fell in one year to 250, barely above the figure for 1924, that is, a loss in one year of the gains made in the five preceding years, with the growth of population showing a steady rise all along the line. Pig iron production declined from its high point of 127.4 to a 1930 average of 83.3, and a low point of 53.5 in December 1930. Steel ingot production declined almost by half from its June 1929 high point in the 1930 average of 77.9, and reached a mark in December 1930 (50.0) only a few points above the low point of 1921. Freight car loadings took a dizzy drop in little over a year from 107.5 to 80.0. The decline in electric power production was only slightly less. Automobile production slumped from 138.8 (December 1928) to 64.3 (November 1930) and 86.0 (December 1930). A sharp decline in foreign trade (merchandize) affected the United States not only in a decline in exports and imports, but in both, as well as in a decline in the favorable balance: The first quarter of the current year showed a foreign trade for the United States of almost exactly half the figure for the same period in 1929 and lower than any figure for more than a decade.

The harshest effects of the crisis are undoubtedly to be found in the records of unemployment. Even the tendencious figures of the government bureau show a terrific decline in manufacturing employment. If March 1925 is taken as roughly 100 (100.4 exactly), the month of February 1931 showed an index figure of 74.1, that is, a falling off of one-fourth of the jobs in manufacturing. More authentic figures place the ranks of the unemployed in the United States at between nine and ten million workers, with no serious indication that this condition of unexampled acuteness is to be ameliorated in the near future. To these telling figures should be added the uncomputed numbers of part-time workers, and a decline in pay-roll totals for those still employed which gives adequate testimony to the broad sweep of the wage-cutting drive. The misery and sufferings which these figures bespeak destroy, by themselves, the legend assiduously cultivated for years that the standard of living of the American working class is assured of a permanently progressive improvement.

The indices listed above serve as the barest outline of the breadth and depth of the crisis in the United States, but they suffice to point out the severity of its effects. To foretell with any measure of exactitude the duration of the crisis, even in its sharpest forms, is exceedingly difficult, particularly because it is not only the United States which is involved, but practically the entire capitalist world. What does appear clearly, however, is the fact that the spurious optimism of the official bourgeois economists and statesmen in the last two years has not only been proved baseless, but that there is no immediate prospect of any substantial turn for the better. Even the more sober of the bourgeois economists now acknowledge that it "seems quite unlikely that American business will attain to what it is willing to call prosperity' before some time in 1932" (Annalist). A more objective estimation of the prospects for a decisive upward swing of the conjuncture would put the period for a commencement of recovery at an even later date.

The present crisis of American capitalism is not its final revolutionary crisis, but it is also distinguished from the cyclical crises experienced by the United States prior to the world war. The latter were characterized by a relatively favorable equilibrium between the development of the productive forces and the development of the internal market, between the growth of agriculture and the growth of industry, and by a position in world economy of very modest dimensions. The present crisis comes after the existence of an acute disruption of the "equilibrium" between agriculture and industry, and only serves to aggravate the agrarian situation; it appears coincidentally with a contracted domestic market which gives no appearance of noteworthy extension in the immediate future; and, finally, it occurs in the period of declining world capitalism and as part of a planetary crisis which, precisely because American imperialism's sources of power are spread all over the world, invests the disruption of American economy with a highly perilous character.

Bearing down in the other direction, however, is another factor which distinguishes the United States today from pre-war America. This factor is the position of world predominance, in economics as well as in politics, which the United States has conquered for itself since the end of the world war, and the pressure to which it submits the rest of the capitalist world. In the period of its present crisis, this pressure, far from being relaxed, is certain to be—must be—intensified. The vast resources of the United States, its unique post-war position, its gradual displacement of England as the leading factor in world economy and politics—all these factors which enabled the American collossus to extricate Germany—and in large measure, Europe in general—from the post-revolutionary crisis (1924), are still effective enough to warrant its ability to extricate itself out of its present crisis by shifting the burden of it not only upon the working class at home, but upon the nations of Europe, even if this time at the expense of hastening the revolutionary crises on the Continent. That the process of "liquidating" the crisis in the United States will not be an easy or speedy one, flows inevitably from the relations between America and Europe. On the contrary, it will bring in its train the bitterest resistance to America and the sharpest convulsions and crises for European capitalism, regardless of whether the initial shock occurs in Asia, Latin America, or Europe itself.

At the present time, what appears to be the most likely avenue of escape from the crisis for the United States? To adjust its production apparatus to the present divisions of the world market would mean to reconcile itself to the status quo of the crisis or worse. The United States will therefore seek to re-adjust the present divisions of the world market to its own productive possibilities. But the successful execution of this attempt pre-supposes, in turn, a readjustment of its industry in preparation for a vigorous assault upon the world market made all the more necessary by the

Call for Second National Conference of the Communist League (Opposition)

To All Branches of the Communist League of America (Opposition):

The more than two years that have elapsed since the first national conference of the Left Opposition in the United States have furnished us with a wealth of experiences nationally and internationally which press for collective examination. New problems have arisen for our movement which demand a Marxian analysis and solution. The work which we have carried out in the past period, and the policies we have pursued, require a review and a summary. The increasing needs of our movement confront us with the problem of elaborating collectively our plans for the coming period. Towards this end, the National Committee issues this call for the Second National Conference of the Communist League of America (Opposition) to be held in New York City from Thursday, September 24, 1931 to Sunday, September 27, 1931.

The pre-convention discussion period, therefore, is hereby formally opened by the publication of the principal thesis of the National Commitee. In coming issues of **The Militant**, there will be published the other theses and resolutions: on trade union work, on the situation in the Communist International and the International Left Opposition, on the situation in the Communist International and the International Left Opposition, on the problems of the youth, and on the Negro question. In addition, the National Committee presents as its thesis on the Russian question the document drafted by comrade Trotsky, already made public as a pamphlet. All these documents should be considered not separately but as parts of one single whole which the National Committee presents for discussion, and for adoption by the conference. All members of the Communist League of America (Opposition) are invited to participate to the greatest extent in the discussion in the branches of the League, as well as in the columns of **The Militant**, which are now thrown open for the pre-conference discussion up to the day when the conference opens. Further conference details will be forwarded to all the branches.

The agenda which the National Committee proposes for the conference is as follows:

1. The Crisis in the Communist International and the Development of the International Left Opposition.
2. The Situation in Russia.
3. Political Report:
   (a) The Perspectives of the American Revolution.
   (b) The Tasks of the Communists.
   (c) The Role of the Opposition.
4. The Trade Union Question:
   (a) The Future of the A. F. of L.
   (b) The Outlook for the New Union Movement.
   (c) Communist strategy and Tactics.
5. Building the Communist League
   The Forms and Methods of Its Future Work.
6. Youth Questions.

National Committee
Communist League of America
(Opposition)

radical international decline of commodity prices. To cut the costs of production is the first step in this direction. This not only signifies an intensified rationalization of industry, a higher efficiency in production, a squeezing out of "unprofitable" intermediary enterprises and small business men, but a universal levelling downward of the working class standard of living. From this it follows that America recovery will not be based in the first place upon a re-establishment of the internal market, upon its domestic expansion, because the purchasing and consumptive power of the proletariat will be lowered in two ways: the existence of millions of permanently unemployed and the decline in the standards of those employed, and because the chronic agrarian crisis shows no signs of let-up but rather points to a further impoverishment of the agricultural producers. Armed on the one hand with its gigantic financial facilities, and on the other hand, with a reorganized industry capable of competing actively in the present state of the world market, the United States will be in a position to turn its attention more energetically to its foreign trade, that is, to the form of its business activity that must assume an ever greater position in its economic life. In recent years, the foreign trade of the United States has not loomed up so large in its economic life. Precisely this fact leads to the belief that in the coming period, it will occupy an increasing place in America's economy. The value of American exports (1928) was twenty-five percent greater than the value of the exports from the United Kingdom, but the exports per capita of the latter were more twice the value of the per capita exports of the former. It is towards a reversal of this and similar ratios that the ruthless advance of American imperialist will strive. The race between the United States and its competitors will proceed at a maddening speed, despite the great obstacles standing in the way in the form of commodity price declines, decreasing ability of foreign countries to absorb loans, the acute international agrarian crisis, the pyramided burdens of war debts, etc. But in the race, the United States, as chief banker of the world, has by that alone a manifest advantage. In 1930, the foreign (net) loans of the U. S., which serve to expand the importing ability of the borrower, were $862,200,000 compared to England's $557,600,000 in which despite the heroic efforts of Britain to expand its influence in Latin America, expressed in an almost two-fold increase of its loans over the previous year, it did not attain the American total for Latin America. The 1930 comparison affords even greater illumination on the relation of forces in contrast to the 1929 loans, when Great Britain came within $130,000,000 of equalling the American volume of foreign underwriting.

Whether or not the United States in the next period will reach the peak it attained towards the end of the last decade cannot be determined in advance. What does flow from the whole situation, however, is that the herculean efforts of the U. S. to issue out of its crisis will entail the extension of the "American plan", that is, the plan to put Europe on diminishing rations in world economy. This in turn will bring with it increasing misery and exploitation of the European masses, the accentuation of the class struggle, confronting the proletariat of Europe with the alternatives: proletarian revolution, war, or submission to the super-exploitation of America.

The fury of America's advance against its imperialist competitors is determined by still another factor. Arriving belatedly upon the field of world conquest, the United States does not enjoy a colonial domain comparable to that of Britain, France, and others. Its Allies came out of the war with increased colonial divisions, in which the United States had virtually no share. Its hegemony in Latin America, its infiltration of China, are far from adequate substitutes for a colonial realm. The crisis poses this imperialist need with pointed imperativeness. Little concerned with the fact that the loss of colonies to Europe will only mean deeper revolutionary crises for the latter, the United States will seek to satisfy its voracious appetite by carving away parts of the colonial empires of Europe. Here, as with every other "issue" from the world crisis, the specters of war and social revolution march side by side.

But the effects of America's efforts to issue out of the crisis are not to be limited to Europe alone. They will be very profound and acute in the United States as well. Rapid as is the decline of the costs of living, marked by the commodity price fall, the decline of the living standards of the American workers is even more precipitous. Rapid as is the decline in employment, with its concomitant of misery for the millions of jobless, the decline in wages has been even more acute. The empty "pledges" of Hoover, of the industrialists, of the A. F. of L. leadership, that "wages will not be cut", has not prevented their being cut. It would be wrong to believe that the process of wage-cutting is coming to an end, in reality, it has only begun. In the terrific offensive that the capitalist class is carrying on and plans to extend against the working class, in the changes produced generally by the crisis, lie the foundations for a change in the relationship of forces within the working class and the opening up of a broad perspective for working class struggles and radicalization.

The Prospects for the American Working Class Movement

The American working class movement has passed through two distinct post-war stages: one of vigorous growth and militant struggles, the other of ideological and numerical degeneration and sluggish passivity. The first stage embraced the first post-war years and coincided with the deflation of the war-bloated industrial apparatus of the country and the eve of the 1921 crisis. It was not only a period of the tremendous growth of the trade unions and the first signs of a mass movement towards a labor party, but also of a series of tremendous strikes in the basic, open shop industries of the country. Moreover, the steel strike, the miners' movement of 1920, the big textile strikes, the railroad walkout, together with the general strike in Seattle, did not coincide accidentally with the over-running of Europe by revolutionary crises—the Triple Alliance in England, the Hungarian and Bavarian revolutions, the occupation of Italian factories, etc., etc.

The second post-war stage can be said to have begun coincidentaliy—and again not by accident—with the conclusion of the revolutionary wave in Europe (defeat of the German October in 1923) and the stabilization of European capitalism. This period of deadly tranquillity for the American working class was marked by the steady decline of the trade union movement, the complete dissolution of the labor and farmer-labor party movements into the avowedly petty bourgeois La Follette swamp and the progressive diminution of the specific gravity of the Communist movement in the working class. In the years between 1924 and 1928, strikes continued to decline in number and in total participants. An unprecedented condition developed: Absorbed again by the industrial-economic apparatus, working amidst ever-increasing riches, the working class movement nevertheless did not solidify itself, did not grow in militancy, did not strike for a greater share in the national income, did not dress its ranks in a class manner. On the contrary: the class consciousness of the masses was dulled to the point of disappearance; its ranks crumbled—at least insofar as its ranks were represented in the American Federation of Labor. Yet its conditions and standards of living did not become worse, particularly in the case of the skilled, organized workers, but more generally (even if not universally) in the case of the less skilled and unorganized workers. This contradiction is to be explained in only one way: The American bourgeoisie, itself enjoying a prosperity comparable only to the days when the British despoiled the vast riches of the Indies, could afford to grant a few fat crumbs to the upper strata of the working class, thus extending its domestic market and escaping the shocks of class warfare at home. While the standards of the working class of the United States did not rise in proportion to the increase in the national wealth and the national income, it did rise above the standards prevailing for the working class before the war and above the standards of the European working class. But the working class purchased this internationally privileged position at the cost of debasing and destroying its own class positions—the trade union and the political movements. In making its profitable concessions, the bourgeoisie in return obtained an acquiescent working class converted—at least in its upper strata—into a petty bourgeois or semi-bourgeois mass. The working class, however, unconsciously paid a heavy price for the temporary improvement in its conditions: As a result, it faces the terrifying shocks of the crisis without any adequate apparatus, with only the merest skeleton of trade unions to defend itself against the capitalist campaign to slash its wages and to lower its lightly won standards of living. This fact alone would suffice to determine the essentially defensive nature of the struggles taking place today and those which will take place tomorrow, and to determine it to the disadvantage of the working class.

Does it follow directly from this, however, that the American working class will go through the crisis—i. e., through the brutal capitalist offensive—without resistance? Such a conclusion follows least logically from the situation. The working class does not conduct a struggle for an abstract, never-changing standard of living, but for a concrete one connected with time and place. As the "prosperity reserves" of the workers reach the vanishing point, as the full and intimate realization of the radically lowered standards penetrate the consciousness of the mass, as it becomes daily more evident that the solution of the crisis is still a long way off, the moods of resistance will become stronger among the workers and begin to gain the upper hand. It is inconceivable that so sharp a decline in the living standards of the workers will be allowed to pass by them without a fight to retain what was gained yesterday, or at least a part of it.

The crisis in the United States, with its attendant unemployment and hardships for the working class cannot but exercize a radicalizing effect upon the American workers from another point of view: the contrast of capitalist America with the advances of the Soviet Union. There is a growing and intense interest among the American workers in the developments of the workers' republic. The comparison of millions of unemployed in wealthy capitalist America with the progress and absence of unemployment in the Soviet Union extends the basis of sympathy for Communism among the workers in general, a sympathy which the capitalist press and other institutions seek to negate by a systematic campaign of falsehood, misrepresentation. The working class gains encouragement from the successful existence of the Soviet republic and the progress of planned economy under the rule of the proletariat makes easier the progress of the Communist movement in the United States. The existence of the Soviet Union is not, by itself, the automatic, mechanical and never-changing guarantee of working class radicalization, as the Stalinists and Right wingers profess to believe. Furthermore, the intimate connection between the needs of the Soviet Union and the interests of the millions of unemployed under capitalism is not utilized by the Centrists along the lines proposed by the Opposition. In fact, they not only reject but prohibit a campaign among the American workers for the extension of long term credits to the Soviet Union to help it buy machinery which would partially alleviate the condition of unemployment. But it remains true that the strides forward made by the Soviet Union stand in favorable contrast to the crisis in capitalist economy and facilitate the work of the Communists in guiding the workers along the road of militant struggle against the endeavors of the bourgeoisie to impose upon the proletariat the burden of the crisis.

It is true that a deep economic crisis does not lend itself to widespread economic struggles of the workers, such as strikes, particularly in face of a huge unemployed army. But this applies primarily and above all to crises which follow a series of defeats, of lost battles, of crushed revolutions, and has been demonstrated especially in the last decade in one country of Europe after another, and today in China. In the United States today, the workers have not been exhausted by previous economic struggles and defeats. On the contrary, the outstanding feature of the period recently passed was the absence of such struggles. The working class still retains unspent resources which, although impaired in great measures by the prevailing unemployment, constitute a factor of great vitality. It cannot and will not stand by passively while its living standards are so radically undercut. It will resist the capitalist offensive in the coming period with an increasing militancy and on ever broader field of struggle. It is towards the perspective of these coming struggles that the revolutionary Communist movement must orient itself.

It is plain that the bourgeoisie is aware of the seriousness of the scope that these battles will assume. It prepares for them in advance. Anti-Communist repressive measures increase in number and in ferocity. More workers are today imprisoned or threatened with imprisonment than at any other time since the war. The application of the Criminal Syndicalism Laws is being widely extended. Meetings and demonstrations are attaacked and disrupted with a violence reminiscent of the war days. In many states the Communist movement is "illegal". For the first time since the end of war, the Communist press is being barred from the mails. The legislative offensive against the foreign-born workers is being resumed and, what is more, hundreds upon hundreds of them are actually being deported. Negroes continue to be subjected to the most atrocious persecutions and to that flower of American capitalist civilization, Lynch law. This whole vile system of persecution demands of the Communists the assumption of leadership in the struggle for elementary democratic rights of free speech, free press and free assembly, a struggle which has been left to the feeble and innocuous conduct of liberals of all stripe. The struggle for the right of the workers to gather, to speak freely, to write and distribute their writings, to organize and act unitedly is an inseparable part of the struggle to strengthen and make easier the road of development of the movements of resistance to the capitalist offensive.

The commencement of this movement of resistance is already visible on the horizon of the class struggle. The number of strikes, all of a defensive nature, has increased in 1931, as has the number of strikers. What is particularly significant is the strike movement of tens of thousands of miners in Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky, aggravated by the prolonged crisis in the bituminous coal industry. It is indicative of the change in the situation that the working class whose conditions were yesterday improved virtually without open struggle, is today compelled to carry on the most violent battle of desperation against what is tantamount to starvation, and in this instance, finds no leadership to guide it in its strike except that of the Communists. This strike, despite the specific conditions existing in the soft coal industry, cannot be considered an isolated phenomenon. Standing against a background of other strike struggles that have taken place in the last year or two (particularly in the textile industry, in the South) and of the sweep of the movement set going around the issue of unemployment, it is indicative of both the scope and the militancy with which the coming struggles of the American workers will be invested.

The Left Opposition cannot accept the Centrist evaluation, according to which the American workers are already now—and allegedly have been, for the last two years—manifesting a deep-going, mass radicalization. In its initial declarations, the Left Opposition tended to accept, although with qualifying reservations, this false estimate. The correct appraisal of the relationship of forces at the given moment indicates that the premises, the preliminary conditions for such a radicalization have been and are being established on an ever broader basis. The very fact that the American proletariat subjectively has lagged so far behind the advance of favorable objective conditions will determine the rapid and big steps forward which it will take when these objectively favorable conditions compel it to adjust itself to them and to catch up with them. In other words, the very backwardness of the American workers in the past, based not only upon specific historical causes but also and primarily upon the extended prosperity period of recent times, will—now that the economic foundation for it is being shaken by the advent of the crisis—be one of the determining factors in driving it forward at an accelerated tempo. It would be a fatal error of the Communists were they to fail to understand the nature of this rapid development and the prospect of struggles ahead that will increase in breadth and depth and militancy, were they to instead look forward and adjust themselves, like the Right wing faction, to the perspective of a new "Victorian era" for American capitalism and a comfortably slow development of the working class movement.

Social Reformism and the Perspectives of the Revolutionary Movement

Along what channels will the advancing movement of the American working class flow in the next period? The Centrist illusionists proceed from the premise in theory that social reformism in the United States is going through a process of decline and disintegration, while the Communist party is growing in influence by leaps and bounds. This determines their tactics to a large extent. The Right wing liquidators, on the other hand, proceed in their practise from the idea that the Communist movement is in decline; they turn their backs upon the masses in and around the organized Communist ranks and under their influence, and stake their cards more and more upon the Left wing of social reformism—even here, not so much upon the discontented workers as upon the shifty "Left wing leaders". The Left Opposition proceeds from the idea that the advancing workers' movement is flowing and will flow simultaneously along the channels of social reformism and Communism. The proportionate strength of the two parallel streams will depend in large measure upon the course pursued by the Communists. The attitude of the self-contented bureaucracy which regards the growth of Communist and the decline of social reformism as an automatic mechanical process—developing outside of time and space and unaffected by the policies of Communism—an attitude which is strengthened with every temporary or superficial success, is the worst kind of self-deception and deception of the ranks. It ignores the fact, made indisputable by all recent evidence, that the basis for social reformism in the United States, far from having been "narrowed down", is being extended.

During the "prosperity period", social reformism which, at the inception of the period, had reached its greatest sweep in the labor and farmer-labor party movements, was almost entirely dissolved in the outright bourgeois and petty bourgeois reform movements of the La Follette type. In the trade union field, the reformist and "progressive" elements the consummated type of which was the leadership of the Chicago Federation of Labor (Fitzpatrick, Nockels, etc.) were once more absorbed into the black reactionary swamp of the Gompers-Green bureaucracy. The elements wavering between the revolutionary movement (the Communists) and the avowed bourgeois movement in the working class (the A. F. of L. bureaucracy) ceased to play any decisive role in this period: they disappeared as factors in the labor movement, or they fell into complete passivity: or they reconciled themselves more or less completely with the trade union bureaucracy, or—this last group was composed of a diminishing few—they worked in intimate contact with the Communists. The tremendous material and ideological weight of the "prosperity" period dulled the militancy of the workers to such an extent that there was no place and no need—in the relationships between bourgeoisie and working class—of a substantial movement intermediate between revolution and reaction and performing the double function of expressing working class discontentment and diverting it from revolutioary paths. This path witnessed not only a decline of the Communist party's influence and numbers, but an even greater relative decline of the Socialist party. The "Chicago type" of progressives became identified once more with the Gompers machine and vanished as a distinct group. The forces grouped around Muste shrank into their shells more and more, eking out a quiet existence by the good graces of Green and Co.

The advent of the crisis, preceded and succeeded by the blunders of official Communism brought with it a growing discontent of the hitherto passive workers. This discontentment is given its social reformist translation in the resurgence of the organized Muste movement (C. P. L. A.) in the trade unions and the growth of its influence (particularly in the textile and mining fields), in the appearance of the new "Left wing" in the socialist party, whose directorate is interlocked with that of the Muste group, and in the steady revival and growth of the Socialist party as a whole—its reestablishment in the needle trade unions, growth of its press, increase in its election votes, etc.

The growth, the unleashing of the social democracy in all its shadings, implies a certain "concession" of the bourgeoisie to the working class and an ability to make this "concession". In the past period the American bourgeoisie was able to satisfy the working class (at least its upper strata) without the aid of the social democracy or its Left wing. In the period of its crisis, the bourgeoisie has need of the social democracy to the extent that the dissatisfaction of the working class increases. The social democracy—from its extreme Right wing in the A. F. of L. bureaucracy to its extreme Left wing in the Muste group—is the staunchest bulwark of bourgeois democracy against the proletarian revolutionary movement. Add to this the fact that the American bourgeoisie is still powerful enough to grant such "concessions" as the growth of reformism, and we not only have an explanation of its expansion but also a reason to calculate upon its growth (not its "narrowing down") in the coming period.

More than ever before, therefore, the next period will be a race for leadership of the working masses between the social reformists—particularly their Left wing—and the Communists, in which all the resources and skill and endurance of the latter will be put to the severest test.

The Centrist apparatus-men see in the growth of the reformist movement, particularly of its Left wing (the Muste group) nothing but a "conspiracy" against Communism. Anxious to have their own yesterdays of alliances with the Purcells of all countries forgotten, they fail to see that the Muste and similar "progressive" movements are the initial manifestations of working class discontent with which the Communists must know how to establish contact, to collaborate in a united front on the basis of immediate issues and freedom of action and criticism of the collaborating forces. The Right wing spokesmen pretend to see in this Left movement only the "ranks", and deliberately neglect to emphasize the specific role played by the leaders, i. e., the contemptible role of paralyzing the activities and militancy of the masses, of preventing it from following its natural course towards revolutionary struggle. The Left Opposition, rejecting both the superficial radicalism of the Centrists and the Menshevik attitude of the Right wing, considers the growth of the social democratic, and particularly of the Left social democratic (Muste) movements as a sign of great significance for the revolutionary party. The Communists can win the workers away from their reformist leaders only if they demonstrate their willingness to join with them in an honest united front for the defense of the immediate interests and needs of the whole class. The Communists are not a sect with special interests outside the interests of the working class in general. The Communist party is the vanguard of the working class with no interests separate from it. As its most conscious enlightened, and militant section, it must take the initiative in forming the broadest united front movement, showing to the workers at every stage of the struggle that it is the Communists who are the most ardent and willing defenders not only of their broad historical interests (the social revolution) but of the most narrow, limited and practical needs of the day (reforms). It is in this way of linking the struggle for daily needs with the final aim, of having the former pave the way for the latter, that the struggle for reforms can be carried on in a **revolutionary** sense, that is, it can be directed against the reformists.

The simple, obvious truth that the workers learn only by their experiences is regarded today as a "bourgeois deviation" by Centrism. But this does not invalidate its correctness. In the struggle for unity of the working class against the capitalist offensive, the workers will learn—provided the Communists know how to teach them—that the Hillquits, Howats, Mustes, et al., are incapable and unwilling to lead a real struggle for their needs, that the Communists are the genuine representatives of the proletariat's cause. Such a struggle corresponds most appropriately with the specific period in which we are participating: the offensive of the capitalist class, plus the weakness of the workers' defense organizations (trade unions, etc.) necessarily arouses among all the workers the feeling that unity is imperative now more than ever before. Those who initiate, lead and fight most militantly for the unification of the labor front will strike a responsive chord among the workers, a response which will bear the greatest fruits for the Communist movement.

It is to cover up their own role of splitters of the labor movement, to cover up the fact that they are operating in the ranks of the workers as the agents of the bourgeoisie, that the reformists of all shades seek to convince the workers that the Communists are "sectarians", that they want to "divide the workers". It is essentially by innumerable demagogic variations on this theme that the reformists are able to hold the workers back from Communism. This is all the greater reason why the Communists must become the banner-bearers in the struggle for unity, openly, sincerely, vigorously, so that even the most backward workers will see and understand where the Communists stand. They must emphasize and repeat tirelessly—and prove it by deeds—that the Communist proposal for a united front is not—as the reformists charge—a "Communist maneuver against the workers" but rather a working class mobilization against the capitalist class.

At certain times and under certain conditions an agreement with the reformist leaders—when they are compelled to take a step forward—is necessary and unavoidable. The dogma of the "united front only from below" vitiates the Leninist conception of the united front and in practise leads to no united front at all.

The Communists cannot, of course take the position that without an organic unity of the revolutionists and the reformists (even if only on the trade union field), it is impossible to conduct successful struggles of the workers. Nor can the united front take the forms of such a bloc of leaders at the top in which the Left wing is subordinated to the agents of the bourgeoisie, and used as an instrument against the workers. The classic form of the betrayal of the working class, developed jointly by the Right wing and the Centrists (Stalin and Bucharin) in the Anglo-Russian Committee, must stand as a lasting warning against such a conception. Nor can we conceive of the united front as the Stalinists do in their zig-zag to ultra-Leftism, that is, confining the whole question to an appeal to the workers to join the Communist party, to join the Left wing unions—and nothing else. This is recruitment, which goes on at all times, but it is not the application of the united front. The "principle" of unity is not and cannot be a fetish to the Communists. But the movement for the united front is an invaluable instrument for mobilizing the masses under revolutionary leadership for militant struggle. It constitutes a powerful lever for unseating the reformists from their positions in the working class. The party must take hold of this lever and exert all its pressure upon it.

* * * *

What is the role of reformism? It serves as a bulwark created by existing bourgeois society against the proletarian revolution. Against the rising proletarian movement, the bourgeoisie and its reformist agents continuously seek to strengthen this bulwark, to prolong its existence. The Communists must seek to break it down as rapidly as possible. The existence of reformism is determined essentially by the strength of the capitalist class, its ability to rule. In the United States, this determinant factor would appear, at first sight, to invest reformism with vigor for many years or decades to come. In reality, however, its foundation is a very shaky one.

Reformism flourished for decades in such classic countries of capitalism as England and Germany in the period of the rise of imperialist society, prior to the world war and the Russian revolution, which radically changed the relationships of international class forces. The new wave of reformism in the United States is rising in the period of the decline of world imperialism, in the period of war and revolution, with its abrupt changes and turns. The tremendous postwar strength and power of American imperialism grows more and more upon the foundation of the convulsively wracked and tenuous economies of the rest of the world. Its power is less and less founded upon an equilibrium of the home market or a balance between agriculture and industry. Precisely because the hands and feet of American economic and political power rest ever more heavily upon the shaky ground of the other continents, the economic and revolutionary upheavals in the latter territories tend to rock the body of the American economic structure with growing violence. Unless the United States succeeds in completely Balkanizing Europe, in opening up the vast Russian market by the overthrow of the proletarian dictatorship, in completely exterminating the revolutionary movement in China—and these are the least likely of all perspectives—it cannot look forward to so lengthy a period of domination as was enjoyed by British imperialism for decade after decade. Even more than pre-war England, its Achilles heel lies precisely in the singular character of its world power. The Marxists cannot look forward to a fatalistic perspective in which the United States must be the last country to fall to the assault of the proletariat. Such a perspective is only the reverse—but no less false—side of the "Marxian determinism" according to which England or Germany stood first on the agenda of the proletarian revolutoin, while Russia was "denied" the possibility of surpassing these lands in point of revolutionary order. The unevenness of social development, rendered particularly acute and jerky in the present epoch of imperialism, may easily advance the United States toward the head of the list.

This coincides with the idea that broad perspectives are now opened up for the growth of the Communist movement, an idea which the more penetrating sections of the bourgeoisie are not the last to share. It is in this connection that the reformists seek to set up the highest possible barriers to the rapid progress of the revolutionary movement. On the economic field, these barriers are represented in the trade union movement by the A. F. of L. bureaucracy, their socialist assistants, and the "Left wing" progressive toadys of the Muste school. On the political field, most of these elements seek to erect a barrier in the form of a "Labor" or "Farmer-Labor" party, that is, a bourgeois workers' party in the image of the British Labor Party.

The American revolutionary movement possesses the richest experiences in the field of "Labor party" politics, conducted in the period of the worst revisionism in the fundamental principles of the Communist movement. None of the main formulations of this problem made in the American party in the period between 1923-1928 was based upon a Marxian conception of the role of the Labor party or of the nature of our epoch. In various

theses, the Labor party was visualized as the alternative to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie! It was planned to be the principal lever in unseating the Gompers bureaucracy. It was regarded as the source for an immediate "mass" Communist party. It was conceived as an embellished and more palatable substitute for the Communist party. It was viewed as an unavoidable and necessary "reformist" stage through which the Ameriaen workers had to pass before they were ready for Communism, and which the **Communists** had to initiate, to build up into a strong movement, whose reformist programs the Communists were to write and defend, whose leadership was to be "in our hands" from the very beginning so that, presumably, it would not become "anti-Communist" or "too reformist". Not by accident did this shameful period in the history of American Communism embrace also the disgraceful "maneuver" with the petty bourgeois La Follette movement, and the flourishing of the "two-class party" theory and practise. Since they all functioned under the ideological domination of the Right-Center bloc which had conquered power in the Comintern and stood upon its theoretical and political platform, all the party groups of that period shared to varying degrees the responsibility for the essentially revisionist conceptions that lay at the basis of the whole "labor party period", and the practises that flowed from them.

All these conceptions and practises must be thrown overboard, because they were originally wrong. The Centrists motivate the change of course they have undertaken on this score with the contention that conditions have changed, that we have entered a "third period" and because the reformists have "now become social fascists". This motivation is both false and dangerous, and leaves the real problem undecided. It is no rejection of the disastrous course of the party, but the maintenance of the basis for its repetition in the future. To condemn a "labor party policy" now because of an alleged "third period" and an alleged transformation of the reformists into "social fascists" leaves the door wide open for a return of the "labor party policy" when the "third period" gives way to a "fourth" and the "social fascists", or their "Left" wing, produce a new set of reformists of the old Fitzpatrick type.

The American Communists cannot undertake to organize a petty bourgeois workers' party "standing between" the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Abstractly considered to be sure, were there a mass movement which would organize a labor party, the Communists would have to take up the question of working within it as a revolutionary nucleus. But this is a different matter entirely. Moreover, it is a matter which has less of a timely significance today—even abstractly—than in past years, since there is no substantial movement at all for a labor party in the 1932 elections. The Communists will enter that campaign under their own banner and in direct struggle against their reformist antagonists, the Socialist party.

It is the reformists of all shades, the Thomases and the Mustes, who seek to set up this petty bourgeois party as a wall against the workers' progress towards Communism; in this work, they are only fulfilling their mission and role of prolonging as much as possible the "reformist period" in the development of the American working class. It is no accident that the Right wing liquidators of the Lovestone group have as the central point in their program the idea that the Labor party's formation is an essential and imperative step for the American workers, which the Right wing is ready to initiate to form and build up. It is this perspective which it recommends to the Communist movement as a whole to adopt. The Left Opposition, at its formative stage, leaned in the direction of this reformist perspectives which constituted to a certain extent an uncritical carry-over of the preceding group struggle in the party, prior to the time when the Left wing took shape and was established as a political grouping distinct from all the others in the movement. The firmer establishment of its Marxian position dictates a break with this early standpoint and the adoption of the one outlined here. The adoption of this revised point of view, the result of clarification in its own ranks, marks a step forward that will enable the Opposition to bring greater clarity on this vital problem into the revolutionary and labor movements as a whole.

The Position of the Communist Movement and the Tasks of the Party

The possibilities for a rapid revolutionary advance of the American movement encounter a tremendous retarding influence in the form of one of the most striking contradictions in the international labor movement: the growing gap between the increasingly favorable situations and the decreasing capacities to exploit them of the official Communist parties. This holds true with particular force in the United States. It is the work of closing the blades of this opened "scissors" that invests the Left Opposition with its historic significance.

In spite of the manifest multiplication of objectively favorable opportunities for progress, the Communist Party of the United States has, in general, only stagnation or regression to record. At a time when its ranks should be increased manifold, it is barely able to hold its own. This phenomenon is all the more impressive in face of the obvious increase of sympathy among the masses for the ideas of Communism and the Soviet Union, and the demonstrated readiness of hundreds of thousands to rally behind the leadership of the Communists.

The leadership imposed upon the party behind its back at the Seventh Convention has showed a tragic bankruptcy in all fields. The condition which the Third Congress of the Comintern described as the "crisis in the leadership on the eve of the revolution" exists to a greater or less degree at all times. In the United States where the party has been confronted for the past two to three years with the need of adjusting itself to the new situation and of reaping a rich harvest of new strength, influence and prestige in the working class, this crisis has assumed a permanent character, increasing in acuteness in direct proportion to the increasing possibilities for success.

The steady loss in party membership commencing with the inauguration of the Ruthenberg-Pepper-Lovestone leadership in 1925, has barely been checked by the new leadership. With the opportunities for growth almost unprecedented, the party membership is still considerably below 10,000, that is, less than half the 1924-1925 figure. The arbitrary, bureaucratic regime in the party, moreover vitiates even the present low figure: the new member remains in the ranks of the party only for a very short time. The turnover in membership is enormous. Literally thousands of new members join the party only to take the place of other thousands who leave, and to be displaced in turn by other new recruits. The party members are ruled like political serfs, the regime is increasingly mechanized; all live and free internal life, all initiative, all inquiry and discussion of vital problems are strangled upon appearance. The functionary rises to leadership upon the basis of ever-ready obedience to the leader next in rank and immediately demands the same obedience from those "below" him; he falls from leadership on the basis of the theory of scapegoats. Leadership based upon an ability tested in such a manner that "those who are led" may see, based upon fruitful initiative and independent thought, upon devotion to the movement instead of to the authorities of the day,—is non-existent in the party. Appointments have almost universally replaced elections. The membership is taught a reactionary contempt for theoretical considerations and is instilled instead with a vulgar "practicalness". It is told, in effect to do the work it is commanded to do and not to do any thinking or discussing about it. It is constantly taken by surprise with new "turns", in which the old policy is just as little explained away as the new policy is justified. Bewildered by the constant changes ordered from above by a leadership floundering in its own incompetence, offended and degraded by the internal regime, like that of Prussian army officers, the worker-Communist drops out of the party or sinks into a passivity from which he is only infrequently raised by the frenzied, hectic "appeals" for "shock troop activities" by a leadership incapable of regulating a healthy party life. While tried revolutionists, loyal to the party and educated in Communist principles, are summarily expelled, new members are recruited directly into the party from street meetings and demonstrations, without any serious qualification test, without any subsequent education to fit him for membership in the highest organ of the proletariat, the party. Finally, the general political-ideological level of the membership has suffered an alarming decline.

These are some of the results in the party of the bureaucratic degeneration of the Centrist leadership which can remain at the head of the party only by strangling it.

The record is no less disastrous in those movement under the party's leadership. The T. U. U. L. and its affiliated unions have been reduced to skeleton orgnizations (resolution of the Profintern). The I. L. D. has stood still or declined (resolution of the International Red Aid Plenum). The Unemployment Councils which, together with the party, stood at the head of demonstrations embracing hundreds of thousands of workers, are reduced to their weak party fractions and an ever-changing handful of sympathizing workers. The "Anti-Imperialist League" has saved itself the trouble of being formally liquidated as a petty bourgeois stamping ground by its virtual decay. The other auxiliary organizations show the same or a worse picture. In none of these organizations, particularly in the Left wing unions, is the non-party workers (and often enough even the party member!) made to feel at home. The party bureaucracy is so uncertain of its policies that it dares not submit them for the workers to judge them as applied in practise: it must therefore force its policies and its leadership upon the workers and even the party members by outrageous mechanical measures. This fact alone is an objective testimony to the fallaciousness of the present political course. The workers, however, cannot be won to Communist leadership by tricks or violence. They can be won only by persuasion and by their own experiences. The attempts to win them by the present methods can only result in continuous losses and defeats.

The present party policy is still based upon the twin ideas of a stormy upsurge of the American workers under the leadership of the Communists and the frontal attack upon the "social fascists", i. e., upon all those who are not under the influence of the Communists. The first idea leads the party into premature actions into adventures, from the defeats of which it frequently recoils to the most vulgar opportunism (from "fight the police" and capture the streets to fight for . . . soup kitchens). The second idea alienates the Communists from the non-party workers particularly the progressive-minded and socialist workers, and enabled the treacherous leaders of the latter to render and keep their followers antagonistic to Communism. The first step of real progress for the party demands as a pre-requisite that both these ideas be condemned and rejected. The party must, instead, take as its point of departure the lead that the premises for a genuine radicalization already exist in the United States; that the capitalist offensive during the present crisis opens the perspective for widespread Communist influence in the coming struggles: that this influence can be won by mobilizing the workers of all political and economic opinions in a genuine united front on the basis of a concrete minimum program of struggle.

It is not the objective situation which is the cause for the shortcomings and defects in the party today. This cause is rather to be sought and uprooted in the party itself, in its leaders and their policies. What are the immediate steps that the party must take to mitigate and eventually to purge itself of the crisis into which it has been thrown?

1. The party must shake off the bureaucratic regime which struggles its initiative, its independence, its ability to grow. The appointment of party officials must be discarded and replaced by their election upon the basis of qualifications. Free discussion must take the place of arbitrary commands from above. The party press must be opened **immediately**—and not only during the spurious "pre-convention period"—for a thoroughgoing and honest discussion of the party crisis by the party members.

2 The party must discard its exaggerated analysis of the tempo of development of the working class and must adjust its course to the real relationship of forces in the class struggle and the pace of its development. The party must finally rid itself of the ruinous baggage of remnants of the "third period", and particularly of the theory of "social fascism". A broad, genuine policy of the united front must be promulgated and every effort made to win the non-party workers on the basis of it.

3. The arbitrary and unconditional policy —both in theory and practise—of deserting the reactionary trade unions which still have a relatively large following must be radically revised. The party must again penetrate into every trade union and build up the influence of the revolutionists on the basis of concrete demands and daily struggles, with the aim of strengthening the trade union movement as a whole under revolutionary guidance and with a revolutionary policy. This course must also be adopted in other mass organizations (fraternal orders, cooperatives, etc.). This does not signify that the party should turn its back upon the Left wing unions under its control. On the contrary. The work of organizing the unorganized majority of the working class in the United States is the foremost task of the Communists, a task which they must initiate and lead. But the Left wing unions too must be in the foreground of the struggle for the united front. They must be given a life of their own, organizationally indenendent, with their own initiative and liberty of action—under the political influence and guidance of the Communists. They must be built up—and the basis for their existence is extremely broad—not by party decrees, but by functioning as militant industrial union organizations in the daily struggles of the working class.

This must not, however, be interpreted to mean the organization of caricatures of new unions. It is necessary to emphasize this point because of the tendency prevalent in the party to pass off such counterfeits as genuine movements. The arbitrary establishment of small and uninfluential committees, endowed with the title of "industrial unions". particularly in such industries where the decisive bulk of the workers are already organized in conservative unions can only discredit the idea of the new union movement. The equally injurious policy of splitting away small minorities from conservative or semi-progressive unions with the aim of establishing a Left wing union as soon as possible and regardless of its strength, its influence and its prestige, must also be rejected out of hand. This is not the road along which the new movement will grow and gain in influence among the workers. Concentration upon the unorganized masses, connecting this movement with the struggle to win the workers in the old unions to our side by concrete and practical issues—this is the way in which the new unions will gather strength and influence. For this, furthermore, the stifling, mechanical regime which has been transferred into these unions bag and baggage from the party must be eliminated ruthlessly.

4. The work of strengthening the party and ridding it of its bureaucratic, revisionist deformations is inseparable from the work of the Left Opposition, and cannot be carried out without the latter. The Left Opposition must be taken back to the party to which it belongs so that all its forces and ideas may be freely available in the work of regendrating the Communist party.

The Left Opposition and Its Role in the Movement

The International Left Opposition came into existence as the counter-agent to the Thermidorian reaction in the Soviet Union and the bureaucratic degeneration of the Communist International. The Left wing did not establish itself outside the ranks of Communists or of the Communist movement. It was brutally and disloyally detached from the ranks of the official parties by the repressive organizational measures of the Centrist and Right wing bureaucracy, acting as the conscious and unconscious agents of reaction.

The present numerical weakness of the Left Opposition is determined by the defeats of Communism on an international scale. The Opposition in the Soviet Union and throughout the Comintern was organizationally defeated only as a result of the period of reaction in Russia (1923-1928), of the defeat of the German October, the Chinese Revolution, the English general and miners' strikes, of the victory of capitalist stabilization in Europe following 1923, etc., etc. The growth and victory of the Left Opposition, therefore cannot be founded upon the defeats of Communism and the Communist parties; on the contrary, they are inseparably connected with the growth and triumph of international Communism. This determines for us our attitude to the official Communist parties in general, and to the American party in particular. Our aim is to strengthen the Communist party, to regenerate it, to help cleanse it of the evils that corrode it, to help it to prepare and consolidate its victories.

The Left Opposition categorically rejects the narrow-minded, bureaucratic, philistine idea—propounded by Stalinism and shared by many pseudo-Oppositionists—that the Communist party is identical with its leadership. This is equivalent to saying that the party has decayed beyond hope, for the present leadership of the Comintern and the parties is bureaucratically and cynically degenerated and lives a purely parastic existence. The party is something far greater to us—and to the thousands upon thousands of militant workers in this country who are in its ranks or under its leadership. The party is the embodiment of a system of revolutionary ideas which the apparatus men have been unable to destroy completely. In the eyes of the militant workers, it represents the life and the traditions of the workers' fatherland, the Soviet Union. It still embraces or influences the overwhelming bulk of the active organized and semi-organized revolutionary militants in the country. It is upon them that the Left Opposition bases its activities and its hopes for growth. We are conducting no struggle against the ideas, the principles, the traditions of Communism, but a struggle against those who seek to discredit and destroy them. The Left Opposition is not a party; it is a faction of the Communist party from which it has been expelled by the bureaucrats against its will and against the interests of the movement. The Left Opposition does not seek to constitute a second party; on the contrary, it categorically repudiates all tendencies in that direction. The party of the Opposition is the Communist party. Its ideas are those established and tested for the revolutionary movement by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. The Left Opposition therefore strives at all times to be reinstated into its party, not upon the condition of an acceptance of all its ideas and principles, but only upon the condition that it is granted the elementary right of all Communist workers: the freedom to defend its revolutionary point of view at the proper time in the proper way, and through the proper channels.

This general attitude towards the party at the same time determines the attitude of the Left Opposition towards other groups in the labor movement. Its struggle against Centrism has not reconciled it to social democratic or anarcho-syndicalist reformism; on the contrary, it has rendered it more intransigeant towards these petty bourgeois tendencies in the working class for it is against their influence in the Communist movement that the Left Opposition has been constituted.

All the fantastic myths and deliberate falsehoods to the contrary notwithstanding the Left Opposition conducts the most relentless struggle against the Right wing liquidators (Lovestone, Brandler, Sellier, etc., etc.). The Right wing is a bridge from the Communist movement to the social democracy. That is what it was when it was the main partner in the leadership of the Comintern (1923-1928), and it is that even more so today, outside the Comintern. The Right wing does not move towards the social democracy at one step or in one straight line. In some places, it has already gone over completely to the social democracy (Czecho-Slovakia, parts of the Brandlerites in Germany, Miller and Co. in the United States); elsewhere, it has "capitulated" to Centrism (Bucharin in Russia); elsewhere it exists "independently". But in any case, whether inside the party or outside of it whether the immediately next step of the Right wing is to the social democracy directly, or indirectly through the Communist party (by temporary capitulation), the course of the Right wing nevertheless remains the course of liquidating the Communist movement and its ideological foundations. This alone determines the fact that the Left Opposition makes no alliance or bloc with the Right wing, which means an alliance against the Party. On the contrary, it makes every endeavor to unite the Communist movement against the liquidatory Right. This does not mean that the Opposition gives up the attempt to win to its ranks the militants who were driven into the Right wing by the stupid tactics and indefensible course of Centrism. Quite the contrary.

This viewpoint, further, determines the attitude of the Left Opposition to the opportunist and confusionist standpoint of Weisbord. Posing as an "adherent" of the Left Opposition, which he discredits, Weisbord seks a bloc with the Right wing liquidators against the "party criminals" in order to do "mass work" and to separate the Communist movement "as a whole" from "Menshevism" —which is represented in the Communist movement by precisely these Right wing liquidators. Weisbord's course could only lead towards a second party which, of course, he can never constitute. The Left Opposition has no need or reason to go through the disastrous experiences of Urbahns, Paz, or Lovestone—a combination of whose policies and views are recapitulated as Weisbord's program. The views of Weisbord are incompatible with the views of the Left Opposition.

The task of the Left Opposition is not the organization of a new party out of the semi-reformist, semi-syndicalist, demoralized, passive, burned-out elements on the fringe of the Communist movement. Our task is the winning of the Communist workers to the principles which lie at our foundation. The first step in accomplishing this task has already been taken in the rallying of the initial cadres of our movement, constituted out of the most advanced Communist militants who, in the party in liberating theselves from the conceptions, and views of Centrism and the Right wing, and separating themselves from all groups and elements maintaining them, adopted the principles of the International Marxian wing. The preservation and training up of the first cadres has necessarily occupied the main place in the work of the Left Opposition in the United States since its establishment and has proceeded with considerable success in spite of the enormous difficulties, and with only an insignificant handful of capitulators to Centrism. The discussions in the organization, the absorption of the experiences of the Opposition in other countries, primarily in the Soviet Union, the publication of the **Militant,** the International Bulletin, and recently, the issuance of a number of fundamental works in English—all these have been of invaluable aid in educating the first cadres of the Left Opposition, and what is more, of breaking down a large measure of the hostility against us artificially fostered in the party by the apparatus.

One of the main achievements of the Opposition has been its ability to contribute to the redressment of the party's course. By its comradely criticism to the party members and intransigeant opposition to the zig-zags of the Centrist leaders, the Left wing has succeeded in influencing the policies of the party to a far greater extent than is apparent. The partial turn from "social fascism" and isolation in the needle trades was considerably accelerated by the propagation of our viewpoint. The sectarian policy pursued among the Illinois miners was largely cast overboard through the combined effect of events and the direct intervention and criticism of the Left. The results obtained in this field dictate an intensification of this work.

The Left Opposition cannot rest content with or confine itself simply to a repetition of its fundamental differences with Centrism on national socialism versus the permanent revolution, on the role of the party, on the nature of the colonial bourgeoisie, on the struggle against war, on the role of reformism, and so forth. It is the task of the Opposition to intervene actively, as an organized group, with its own proposals and program of action in every situation. This intervention must take place within and around the organized Communist movement, and not outside of it, without it, or without regard to it. The Left Opposition must appear not merely as an organ of criticism after the event. It can and should come forward in every field of the Communist movement's activity with proposals calculated to advance the interests of the movement, with the aim of showing by concrete action the correctness of a consistent Marxian line as against the confusion and zig-zags of Centrism. This work will not only strengthen the party and the general Left wing movement, but it will consolidate the Left Opposition, by convincing the revolutionary militants, on the basis of their own experiences, that we stand firmly for the building of the revolutionary movement at every stage of its development.

Towards this end also, the Opposition must reorganize and consolidae its faction inside the party and Y. C. L., gaining to its side the best party militants, working inside the party and league for their liberation from the Centrist bureaucracy, from opportunism, and adventurism. It is only by such intimate contact with the innermost life of the party and league that the Opposition will be able to accomplish the aims it has set itself.

The Left Opposition must now direct its attention towards a new wave of support from the ranks of the party. The contradiction between the interests and needs of the party, and the false course and incompetence of the bureaucracy, cannot forever be suppressed by the apparatus. The process of development in our direction will be considerably accelerated by the events in the international, and above all, by the events in the Soviet Union. The Left Opposition must be alive to the situation and drive ahead for a speedy crystallization of the new movement in our direction. This requires a firm tightening up of the ranks of the Opposition. As is inevitable, elements tend to enter our ranks as a place of refuge from the struggle. Others look upon their title of Left Oppositionist as an absolution from active, self-sacrificing daily work for the movement. The Left Opposition leave room in its ranks for such elements only at the risk of its own decadence. Tasks to every Oppositionist! Active daily work from every member! Great efforts and sacrifices for the movement! These must be inscribed upon the banner of the organization. The unavoidable organizational looseness that has been manifest up to now must be sharply checked and eliminated.

The Left Opposition has assumed a gigantic historical task; the restoration of the international Communist movement to the revolutionary principles upon which it was built up. In the United States this task is rendered doubly significant by the general backwardness of the working class, the weakness of the Communist movement, and by the magnificent revolutionary perspectives which are being opened up to the proletarian movement. The Marxist must be able to measure up to the heights of their task. Standing upon the firm foundations of the teachings of the leaders of the international proletariat, enriched by the lessons of the revolutionary struggles of the last two decades, irreconcilable in principle and remaining true to its own past, the Left Opposition goes forward to the struggles of tomorrow confident of the ultimate victory.

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The Result of the Elections in Spain

(Continued from page 1)

on the basis of a genuinely universal and direct suffrage for men and women from the age of 18. In other words: to the non-democratic and tricky Cortes we must, at the present stage, oppose the genuinely democratic and honestly elected popular Cortes.

Weakness of Spanish Communism

5. Had the Communists tried today to turn their backs upon the Cortes setting up against it the slogan of Soviets and of the dictatorship of the proletariat, they would only have showed that they should not be taken seriously. There is not a single Communist in the Cortes (according to the Turkish press). It is obvious that the revolutionary wing is much stronger in action, in the struggle, than in parliamentary representation. Nevertheless, there exists a certain relationship between the strength of a revolutionary party and its parliamentary representation. The weakness of Spanish Communism has revealed itself completely. Under these conditions, to speak of the overthrow of bourgeois parliamentarism by the dictatorship of the proletariat would mean quite simply to play the role of simpletons and prattlers. The task is to become stronger on the basis of the parliamentary stage of the revolution and to assemble the masses around oneself. It is only in this way that parliamentarism can be vanquished. But it is precisely for this that it is indispensable at present to develop a violent agitation under the slogans of the most decisive and the most extreme democracy.

6. What are the criteria for putting forward these slogans? On the one hand, one must have in mind the general direction of the revolutionary development which determines our strategic line; on the other hand one must take into account the state of mind of the masses. The Communist who does not reckon with this last factor risks breaking his neck. Let us reflect a little on the question of knowing how the Spanish workers, the masses, look upon the present situation. Their leaders, the socialists, are in power. This increases the demands and the intransigeance of the workers. Every striking worker will believe that he need not only have no fear of the government but, on the contrary, that help may be expected from it. The Communists must guide the thought of the workers precisely in this sense: "Demand everything from the government, since your leaders are to be found in this government". The socialists will reply to the workers' delegations that they have not the majority. The reply is clear: if the genuinely democratic right of suffrage is obtained, and if the coalition with the bourgeoisie is broken, the majority will be guaranteed. But that is just what the socialists do not want. Their position puts them into contradiction with the bold democratic slogans. If we simply oppose the dictatorship of the proletariat to the Cortes we will succeed in grouping the workers around the socialists, because both of them will say: The Communists want to command us. While by democratic slogans and by the rupture between the socialists and the bourgeoisie, we drive a wedge between the workers and the socialists and we thus prepare the next stage of the revolution.

The Slogan of Soviets

7. All the considerations mentioned above would remain a dead letter were we to confine ourselves to the democratic slogans in the parliamentary sense. There can be no question of this. The Communists participate in every strike, in every manifestation of protest, in every demonstration, they arouse ever more numerous strata. The Communists are with the masses and at the head of the masses in every fight. On the basis of these fights, the Communists put forward the slogan of Soviets and build up these Soviets on the first occasion as **organizations of the proletarian united front.** In the present stage, the Soviets can be nothing but this. But if they arise as fighting organizations of the proletarian united front, they will inevitably become, under the leadership of the Communists organs of the insurrection and then also the organs of power.

8. In developing boldly the agrarian program, one must in no case forget the independent role of the agricultural workers. This is the most important lever of the proletarian revolution in the country. With the peasants, the workers make an **alliance,** while the agricultural workers are a part of the proletariat itself. This profound difference must never be forgotten.

9. I learn from **La Verite** that the Stalinists accuse the whole Left Opposition as well as me personally of being against the immediate confiscation of landed property. Truly, it is hard to foresee in what direction the demagogic bureaucrats will turn. What does the "immediate" confiscation of the land signify? By whom? By what organizations? It is true that the incomparable Peri affirmed back in April that the Spanish peasants were building up Soviets and that the workers were following the Communists in masses. Naturally, we agree that the Soviets (or unions, or committees) should **immediately** take the land of the large landlords into their hands. Only, the peasants must be aroused. And for that, the workers must be torn away from the influence of the socialists. One does not go without the other. Would the Stalinists like to say that we favor landed property? But even in calumny there must be logic. How does the defense of landed property flow from the permanent revolution? Let them endeavor to show us.

Stalinist Slander

As for us, we will recall to them that when the Stalinists conducted in China the policy of the four classes the Political Bureau, under the leadership of Stalin sent telegrams to the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party demanding **the curbing of the peasant movement in order not to repulse the "revolutionary" generals.** Stalin and Molotov introduced a small restriction into the agrarian program: the confiscation of the lands of the big landlords except for those belonging to the officers. But since all the landowners and the sons and nephews of the landowners entered into the army of Chiang Kai-Shek, the union of the "revolutionary" officers became a guarantee for the property of the landowners. This shameful chapter in the history of the Stalinist leadership canot be expunged. The Opposition found a copy of the telegram in the minutes of the Political Bureau, it denounced and doomed to shame this betrayal of the agrarian revolution. Now these gentlemen seek to attribute to us in Spain the crimes which they committed in China. They will not succeed: now the Opposition has its section in almost every country which will not permit them to spread lies and confusion with impunity. The Left Opposition will clarify all the fundamental disputed questions in the light of the Spanish revolution and it will take a gigantic step forward. Not for nothing is the revolution the locomotive of history.

LEON TROTSKY.

Kadikoy, July 1, 1931

The British Scene

MacDonald's 'Victories'

Only a full understanding of the rather stormy developments of the class struggle in England during recent years can explain the rise to power and a two year reign of the MacDonald Labor party leadership. But it must also lead to the conclusion that it has passed its zenith and is facing its period of decline, not merely by the Conservatives gaining at its expense but primarily by the coming turn towards the Left of the British working class. This grows inevitably out of the conflict of the shabby Fabian-imperialist position of this leadership with the actual needs of the working class.

The stormy strikes of 1917 to 1920 terminated in the defeat of Black Friday. In consequence of this defeat the British workers turned their attention to the political parliamentary field, to support of the labor party which became expressed in immense gains at the following elections of 1922. The Labor party polled 4,236,733 votes, almost doubling its vote at the preceding elections in 1918. Again in 1926, the general strike came to an inglorious defeat and once more the British workers put their faith in the labor party as expressed in the following elections of May 1929. It again immensely increased its vote, polling a total of about 8,000,000. For the second time it took over the government.

Struggles Looming

Without a question of a doubt serious economic struggles are once more looming in England. The all important question is: Will the British workers now know how to draw the correct political conclusion? Will it mark a period of growth for the Communist party?

The 1929 elections, if they recorded anything, recorded a victory of reformism over Communism. From the time of the general strike, the decline of influence of the Communist party seemingly correspond quite closely, in its relative proportion, to the growth of influence of the labor party. In future perspectives this must be seriously taken into account: and it becomes an imperative duty for the British C. P. first of all to furnish a sober analysis. One may begin by asking how did the party follow the advice given by Lenin to British Communists in his polemics against "Leftism" in Communism? This pamphlet, written in 1920 it will be recalled, proposed to the Communists to form a bloc with the labor party against the reactionaries in power—"to support (it) the same way as the rope supports the man who has hanged himself".

It would, of course, be foolish to attempt to interpret such advice in the sense of applying literally or in essence at all times. But how far the British C. P., under the direction of Stalinism, has departed from this fundamental approach in two important situations first in a Right opportunist direction, later in a Leftist direction, has been clearly recorded by history.

The first instance we have in mind was the sorry role cut out for the Communists in the Anglo-Russian "Unity" Committee during and after the general strike. In the name of this spurious united front the Communist party apparently gained in influence and following, particularly for the Minority Movement. But it became only an influence gained for, and a following built around the "Left" deceivers, those who—also in the name of the united front—betrayed the strike. With the collapse of the strike and the final collapse of the Anglo-Russian "Unity" Committee, the influence and following remained by and large with the deceivers who had merely functioned temporarily as the "Left" shield for the utterly reactionary trade union leadership. From this blow, the British Communist Party has not yet recuperated. It could not then and could not since unmask these "Lefts" because the error of this spurious united front has remained uncondemned.

The "Third Period" in England

The second instance came after the Stalin directed Comintern had officially proclaimed the "third period". At the 1929 parliamentary elections, the C. P. entered its candidates under the slogans "class against class" and "fight all three capitalist parties" with the characterization of "social Fascism". As an analysis the former is of course, correct. Moreover, in the class struggle it is always a matter of class against class. But as a concrete slogan and with the combintion of the latter it could not at all serve to win the workers. It repelled them and threw them back into the arms of the bourgeois pacifists of the labor party leadership. The brief experience of the nine months' government of these politicians in 1924 had by no means been sufficient for the British workers to recognize the banalities of their professed gradualness of socialism. On the other hand, had the C. P. understood correctly the revolutionary art of unmasking their deceptive reformist position it would at least have enabled it to secure the worker contacts which could become particularly valuable now with the additional experience of "labor" in office. However with the serious errors of the Anglo-Russian "Unity" Committee remaining uncondemned and unclarified; with the Stalinist revisionism saturating the ocre of its leadership, this could not be expected.

In the language of bourgeois diplomats the MacDonald government is credited with a "brilliant" record in colonial and foreign affairs. It upheld the British tradition of—continuity in foreign affairs, in other words it proved itself an effective agent in carrying on the policy of its imperialist predecessors. It has been characterized by that bourgeois diplomats call a "policy of firmness in Egypt and India", which means that the laobr government has known how to interchange successfully "at the right moment" diplomatic trickery or open brutal suppression; to substitute machine guns and deadly poison gasses for the mere police lathi and cane to subjugate their rebellious colonial people. If the recognition of and trade relations with the Soviet Union re-established by the second MacDonald government has not yet brought a favorable trade balance to British capitalism, they undoubtedly still have hopes of reaching this point. At the Hague, the "little giant", Philip Snowden, in the words of the New York **Current History,** "pressed British claims with a pertinacity which the most imperialistic conservative who ever lived could not have surpassed". Even Arthur Henderson has proven his "brilliancy" in defending British imperialist interests in foreign affairs.

MacDonalds Imperialist Policy

But it is now in most recent European devlopments that these hybrid pietists, who abhor all force and violence,—except when in the interest of British imperialism—are again grasping for an opportunity "brilliantly" to serve these interests. While the American imperialists proceed in their ruthless expansion endeavoring to put the European powers on rations and at this moment, through the Hoover moratorium, particularly directs a blow at France, demanding armament reductions. MacDonald also sees his opportunity. That the European bourgeois powers will fight more desperately between themselves for their diminishing rations is now being historically proven. The French bourgeoisie insists on stiff conditions for financial assistance to Germany. The MacDonald government squirming under the pressure its capitalist masters already suffer for the American colonies, fight the harder for its diminishing ration. It joins the demands for armament reductions—in France. On July 11, it organized a "peace" parade through London, winding up in Albert Hall. All three party leaders, MacDonald, Baldwin and Lloyd George, spoke—for peace. They professed armament reduction in England and strongly alluded to certain other powers (primarily France) who had immensely increased their armaments. While British imperialism is losing its world hegemony it fights desperately for a European hegemony. However, the French bourgeoisie have had the audacity even to surpass England in armament expenditures. According to the report of the World Peace Foundation, the figures for the last fiscal year were (at least the public figures) France $446,980,000—England $465,255,000. That hegemony within the capitalist world is determined by nothing but armed forces is perfectly well known to the pious gentlemen of the MacDonald government who look with horror toward force applied by proletarian revolutions. So while they talk peace and reduction of armaments they follow the tradition of "continuity of policy" of the imperialists of the previous cabinets. For purposes of public consumption MacDonald wound up his "peace" sermon at Albert Hall with the following drivel: "The problem that we have got to face is the man and the woman that can come up to the assault be beaten back, come back again, full of heart and spirit, knowing that wrong will not triumph; but by the faith, the persistence, the energy and the determined human heart, that which we regard as precious, that which we regard as essential to the divine purposes poses of creation, is bound by patience, by energy and by faith to be carried to triumphant issues in the course of world affairs."

But what his speech actually implied was a call upon all patriotic Britons to rm more effectively to maintain by force the diminishing imperialist ration against the competing powers, this time particularly aiming at the former ally —France.

—ARNE SWABECK.

The Pittsburg Conference

(Continued from page 1)

only from below". All this in spite of the fact that the credentials committee showed that out of a total of 682 delegaes, only 65 came from the U. M. W. A. (and they came mostly from minority groups in the mines and not the local unions—approximately three delegates to a mine group.)

Question of National Strike

The conference very properly decided not to call a national strike as yet. The credentials committee report showed that the delegation consisted of representatives of 35,279 miners still at work, and of 45,491 mienrs who were on strike. It therefore becomes absolutely necessary to spread and deepen the strike at this stage of the game. The national strike is still a matter of the future.

The six-hour day was incorporated into the program. No explanation was given as to why the eight-hour day slogan issued earlier in the strike was changed to the six. The R. I. L. U. gave the word and the "leaders" forgot that the seven-hour day prevails in the Soviet Union . . . and the program was changed. What's an hour or two between friends?

Resolutions were adopted for the release of every class war prisoner possible—but of course, Morgenstern and Goodman were completely (or purposely) forgotten—they are Left Oppositionists.

It can be said with absolute certainty that the delegates are returning home with renewed vigor to carry out the strike to a successful conclusion. And provided adequate relief reaches the field the strike has great possibilities. It can also be said with just as much assurance that the policies of Foster, Borich, and Company on the united front will constitute no help but rather a tremendous obstacle in the way of further growth of the Left wing in the mining industry, and in undermining the faith of the workers in the "progressives" of the Keeney, Howat, Music type. These policies must be replaced by a correct approach to the needs of the present situation—a genuine united front.

—GEORGE CLARKE.

HELP THE PRESS OF THE SPANISH OPPOSITION

From our Spanish comrades we have received the following appeal:

"The developments which Spain is passing through today should be of the greatest interest and a serious lesson to the working class everywhere. How soon we shall arrive at the social revolution in Spain cannot be foretold, but the objective situation is obviously a revolutionary one. The Spanish Left Communist Opposition has great possibilities of development. We believe we do not exaggerate when we expect that within a short time the Left Opposition in Spain will be the most important section of the International Opposition. We have within our ranks very active comrades of considerable authority in the Spanish working class movement, as for example, comrades Andres Nin, Loredo Aparicio, Esteben Bilbao, Gorkin, Lacroix and Juan Andrade.

"But the difficulties we face are great. We have before us the official party, with its denunciation and slanders of us. Although the party has very little authority among the masses, it attempts to use the prestige of the Russian revolution to fight us and to split the Communist movement. We fight for unity of the Communist ranks. But we have not the funds to issue the necessary papers, leaflets, etc. We were able to start the publication of our theoretical organ thanks to the contribution of our French comrades. Can we count upon you to help us spread our revolutionary propaganda material to the Spanish speaking workers in the United States? Can we count upon you for financial support?"

This letter needs no comment except to emphasize the urgency of the request. Our comrades in Spain have an immense task before them. They are the only force which can really be counted upon to help unify the Communist movement and thus take the first steps toward preparing the Spanish working class for the proletarian revolution. We pass their appeal on to our readers and supporters. Will you help as generously as you can? Will you forward your contribution without delay for speedy transmission to our Spanish comrades? Send all funds to A. Gonzales, care of the **Militant,** 84 East 10th Street, New York City. All funds will be receipted and announced in these columns.

National Committee, Communist League of America, (Opposition)

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ATTENTION, YOUTH!

The June 15th issue of the "Young Vanguard" contains our appeal to the convention of the Young Communist League. It summarizes in concise form the position of the Left Opposition youth. It can serve as a means of awakening interest in our platform among the more active and advanced Y. C. Lers. It is therfore important that we have a wide distribution of that issue among the Communist youth. Comrades should make efforts in this direction.

Problems of the Spanish Revolution

In a letter to comrade Lacroix, I presented some supplementary considerations on the subject of the situation in Spain. Unfortunately, I have not the complete information neded to know how the Spanish Communists of the various groupings pose the present political questions. The analysis of the revolutinary situation under these conditions is harder than playing chess without looking at the chess-board. There always remain questions which require a supplementary study. Before a resorting to the press, I now want to pose thee questions before you, and through you, before the Spanish Communists and before all the sections of the International Opposition.

The "Intermediate Revolution"

A considerable portion of my article on the dangers which threaten the Spanish revolution is devoted to showing that between the bourgeois-democratic revolution of April and the future proletarian revolution, there is no room for an intermediate worker-peasant revolution. In passing I emphasized that this does not mean that the party of the proletariat, "up to the final struggle", must occupy itself solely with accumulating forces. Such a conception would be antirevolutionary and worthy of philistines. If there cannot exist an **intermediate revolution,** an intermediate **regime,** there can on the contrary be intermediate manifestations of the masses, strikes, demonstrations, encounters with the police and the army, violent revolutionary collisions during which the Communists will naturally be in the front ranks of the fight. What is the possible historical sense of these intermediate struggles? On the one hand, they can provoke democratic changes in the bourgeois-republican regime and on the other hand, they can prepare the masses for the conquest of power, for the creation of the proletarian regime.

The participation of the Communists in these struggles and above all their participation in the **leadership** of these struggles requires of them not only a clear comprehension of the development of the revolution as a whole, but also a capacity for issuing such specific burning and militant slogans which do not flow directly from the "program" but which are dictated by the circumstances of the day and lead the masses forward.

Everybody knows the enormous role played in 1917, during the Russian coalition of the socialist-conciliators and the liberals, by the Bolshevik slogan: "Down with the ten capitalist ministers!" The masses still had confidence in the socialist-conciliators, but the most confiding masses always have an instinctive distrust of the bourgeoisie, of the exploiters, of the capitalists. It is upon this that the tactic of the Bolsheviks was based for a definite period. We did not say, "Down with the socialist ministers". We did not even issue the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government" as a fighting and actual slogan. But for that, we always hit incessantly on the same nail: "Down with the ten capitalist ministers!" This slogan played an enormous role, since it permitted the masses to convince themselves that the socialist-conciliators thought much more of the capitalist ministers than of the working masses.

Slogans of this type correspond better than anything else to the present stage of the Spanish revolution. The proletarian vanguard is entirely interested in pushing the Spanish socialists to take the power into their hands. That is why the coalition must be broken up. The present task consists of the struggle to drive the bourgeois ministers out of the coalition. Such a solution of this task or some other, is possible only in connection with important political events, under the drive of new movements of the masses, etc. Thus, under the drive of the movements of the masses in Russia, there was thrown overboard from the coalition government first Gutchkov and Miliukov and later on Prince Lvov; Kerensky was put at the head of the government, the number of "socialists" increased, etc. After the arrival of Lenin, the Bolshevik party did not solidarize itself for an instant with Kerensky and the conciliators. But the party helped the masses to remove the bourgeoisie from power and to put the government of the conciliators to the test in action. It was an indispensable stage on the road of the rise of the Bolsheviks to power.

Communists and Socialist Workers

The elections to the Cortes will reveal, from what I can judge from here, an extreme weakness of the Right wing republicans, of the type of Zamora-Maura. They will give a preponderating advantage to the petty bourgeois conciliators of various colors: radicals, radical-socialists, and "socialists". In spite of this, one can predict with certitude that the socialists and the social-radicals will cling with all their strength to their Right wing allies. The slogan "Down with Zamora-Maura" is quite opportune. Only, one thing must be understood: the Communists make no agitation for the Leroux ministry, they take no responsibility for a socialist ministry, but at every given moment they direct their blows against the most determined and the most consistent class enemy, and by that they weaken the conciliators and clear the ground for the proletariat. The Communists say to the socialist workers: "You have confidence in your socialist leaders, compel them then, to take power. We will help you **partially,** while having no confidence in them. And when they are in power, we will put them to the test and we shall see who was right—we or you."

This is dealt with above in connection with the composition of the Cortes. But other events, as for example the repressions against the masses, can confer an exceptional acuteness upon the slogan of "Down with Zamora-Maura". Victory in this field, that is, the resignation of Zamora, might, at the given stage, have almost the same significance for the subsequent development of the revolution as the resignation of Alfonso in April. In order to issue such slogans one must be guided not by doctrinary abstractions but by the state of mind of the masses, by the reaction which each partial success produces upon the masses. The opposition pure and simple of the slogan of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" or of the "workers' and peasants' republic" to the present regime, is entirely inadequate, because these slogans do not move the masses.

As a counterpart to what has just been said, the question of **"social Fascism"** comes forward again. This stupid invention of the terribly Leftist bureaucracy becomes today in Spain the greatest obstacle on the road of the revolution. Let us return again to the Russian experience. The Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionists, being in power, conducted the imperialist war, they defended the capitalists, they persecuted the soldiers, the peasants and the workers, they proceeded to arrests, they introduced capital punishment, they protected the assassins of the Bolsheviks, they compelled Lenin to lead an illegal existence, they kept the other leaders of Bolshevism in prison, they spread the worst slanders against them, etc., etc. All this was more than enough for calling them "social Fascist". But in 1917, this word did not even exist which did not, as is known, prevent the Bolsheviks from coming to power. After the terrible persecutions against the Bolsheviks in July-August the Bolsheviks sat together with the "social Fascists" in the organs of struggle against Kornilov. At the beginning of September, Lenin, from his secret hiding place, proposed to the Russian "social Fascists" the following compromises: "Break with the bourgeoisie, take over power and we Bolsheviks will fight inside the Soviets for power by normal (peaceful) means."

Had there been no difference between the conciliators and Kornilov, who was the genuine "Fascist", then no common struggle of the Bolsheviks and the conciliators against Kornilov would be possible. Yet this struggle played a great role in the development of the revolution, by repulsing the attack of the counter-revolution of the generals and by helping the Bolsheviks to tear the masses away completely from the conciliators.

The nature of the petty bourgeois democracy lies precisely in the fact that it swings between Communism and Fascism. During the revolution, these swings are particularly accentuated. To regard the Spanish socialists as a species of Fascism means to give up utilizing their inevitable swings to the Left: this means to cut off for oneself the road to the socialist and the syndicalist workers.

To conclude, I must emphasize tha the merciless criticism of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism today presents the most important task, which must not be neglected for a single instant. At its top anarcho-syndicalism is the most masked the most perfidious and the most dangerous form of conciliation with the bourgeoisie. Among the workers who constitute the ranks of anarcho-syndicalism, there are potentially very great forces for the revolution. The fundamental task of the Communists here is the same as towards the socialists: to oppose the ranks to the top. However, the work must be carefully adapted to the specific spirit of trade union organization and to the specific character of the anarchist mask. On this point, in another letter.

I insist once more: The articles, resolutions, paltforms etc., of the revolutionary organizations and groups in Spain must be assembled and translated into French, and sent to all the sections for translation into other languages.

LEON TROTSKY

Kadikoy, June 24, 1931